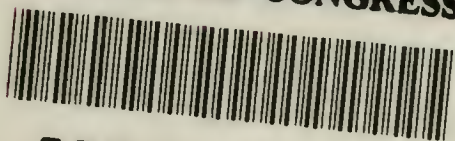


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LETTERS

OF

M<sub>R</sub>S. ADAMS,

THE WIFE OF JOHN ADAMS.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

BY HER GRANDSON,

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

FOURTH EDITION,

REVISED AND ENLARGED, WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING  
THE LETTERS ADDRESSED BY JOHN Q. ADAMS TO HIS SON  
ON THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.



BOSTON:

WILKINS, CARTER, AND COMPANY.

MDCCCXLVIII.

1848

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# P R E F A C E

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

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THE preceding editions of these Letters have been long since exhausted. And the late decease of the writer's son, to whom several of the most interesting of them were addressed, having renewed the inquiry for the work, the Editor ventures once more respectfully to present it to the public. He has seized the opportunity carefully to revise the collection, to omit one or two of the least important letters and to add a large number which, since the date of the last publication, have been most kindly furnished by the descendants of the individuals to whom they were addressed. He has also brought them into a form more compact and convenient for general use than they have had heretofore.

An Appendix is also added in which the Editor has inserted eleven Letters upon the study of the Bible, written in 1811 by John Quincy Adams in Russia, to his eldest son, then a boy left in America. As these Letters have no necessary connection with the body of this work, it may perhaps be proper to explain the reasons why they have been joined to it. The fact that many copies of them, hastily taken, and there-



fore likely to abound in errors, exist in manuscript, has been well known to the Editor for some time past, as it also was known to the Author himself long before his death. So long as no publication of them in print was allowed to take place by persons into whose hands such copies fell, the dissemination of defects was not likely to be such as to make correction necessary. Up to a late moment Mr. Adams entertained an intention of printing them himself, with additions elucidating his latest views upon the interesting subject. But this shared the fate of many similar literary projects cut off by his active life. Scarcely had he left the scene before the restraint, up to that moment preserved, was broken, and an unauthorized publication of the Letters, filled with errors and imperfections, took place in one newspaper of the city of New York, from which they have been transferred into other papers far and wide over the Union. It seems therefore necessary for his family to seize the earliest opportunity to reclaim them and place them in the most correct form of which they are now susceptible. It is however mainly in anticipation of a larger work which the Editor meditates submitting at some future day to the public, that he is compelled to resort to this immediate method of protecting them.

QUINCY, May, 1848.

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MEMOIR.



## MEMOIR.

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THE memorials of that generation, by whose efforts the independence of the United States was achieved, are in great abundance. There is hardly an event of importance, from the year 1765 to the date of the definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain, in September, 1783, which has not been recorded, either by the industry of actors upon the scene, or by the indefatigable activity of a succeeding class of students. These persons have, with a highly commendable zeal, devoted themselves to the investigation of all particulars, even the most minute, that relate to this interesting period. The individuals, called to act most conspicuously in the Revolution, have many of them left voluminous collections of papers, which, as time passes, find their way to the light by publication, and furnish important illustrations of the feelings and motives under which the contest was carried on. The actors are thus made to stand in bold relief before us. We not only see the public record, but also the private commentary; and these, taken in connexion with the contemporaneous histories, all of which, however defective in philosophical analysis, are invaluable depositories of facts related by living witnesses, will serve to transmit to posterity the details for a narration in as complete a form as will in all probability ever be attained by the imperfect faculties of man.

Admitting these observations to be true, there is, nevertheless, a distinction to be drawn between the materials for a history of action and those for one of feeling; between the conduct of men aiming at reputation among their fellow-beings, and the private, familiar sentiments, that run into the texture of the social system, without remark or the hope of observation. Here it is, that something like a void in our annals appears still to exist. Our history is for the most part wrapped up in the forms of office. The great men of the Revolution, in the eyes of posterity, are like heroes of a mythological age. They are seen, for the most part, when conscious that they are acting upon a theatre, where individual sentiment must be sometimes disguised, and often sacrificed, for the public good. Statesmen and generals rarely say all they think or feel. The consequence is, that, in the papers which come from them, they are made to assume a uniform of grave hue, which, though it doubtless exalts the opinion later generations may entertain of their perfections, somewhat diminishes the interest with which they study their character. Students of human nature seek for examples of man under circumstances of difficulty and trial; man as he is, not as he would appear; but there are many reasons why they are often baffled in the search. We look for the workings of the heart, when those of the head alone are presented to us. We watch the emotions of the spirit, and yet find clear traces only of the reasoning of the intellect. The solitary meditation, the confidential whisper to a friend, never meant to reach the ear of the multitude, the secret wishes, not to be blazoned forth to catch applause, the fluctuations between fear and hope, that most betray the springs of action, — these are the guides to character, which most frequently vanish with the moment that called them forth, and leave nothing to posterity but the coarser elements for judgment, that may be found in elaborated results.

There is, moreover, another distinction to be observed, which is not infrequently lost sight of. It is of great importance not only to understand the nature of the superiority



of the individuals, who have made themselves a name above their fellow-beings, but to estimate the degree in which the excellence for which they were distinguished was shared by those among whom they lived. Inattention to this duty might present Patrick Henry and James Otis, Washington, Jefferson, and Samuel Adams, as the causes of the American Revolution, which they were not. There was a moral principle in the field, to the power of which a great majority of the whole population of the colonies, whether male or female, old or young, had been long and habitually trained to do homage. The individuals named, with the rest of their celebrated associates, who best represented that moral principle before the world, were not the originators, but the spokesmen of the general opinion, and instruments for its adaptation to existing events. Whether fighting in the field, or deliberating in the Senate, their strength against Great Britain was not that of numbers, nor of wealth, nor of genius ; but it drew its nourishment from the sentiment that pervaded the dwellings of the entire population.

How much this home sentiment did then, and does ever, depend upon the character of the female portion of the people, will be too readily understood by all, to require explanation. The domestic hearth is the first of schools, and the best of lecture-rooms ; for there the heart will coöperate with the mind, the affections with the reasoning power. And this is the scene for the almost exclusive sway of the weaker sex. Yet, great as the influence thus exercised undoubtedly is, it escapes observation in such a manner, that history rarely takes much account of it. The maxims of religion, faith, hope, and charity, are not passed through the alembic of logical proof, before they are admitted into the daily practice of women. They go at once into the teachings of infancy, and thus form the only high and pure motives of which matured manhood can, in its subsequent action, ever boast. Neither, when the stamp of duty is to be struck in the young mind, is there commonly so much of alloy in the female heart as with men, with which the genuine metal may be fused, and the face of the coin made

dim. There is not so much room for the doctrines of expediency, and the promptings of private interest, to compromise the force of public example. In every instance of domestic convulsions, and when the pruning-hook is deserted for the sword and musket, the sacrifice of feelings made by the female sex is unmixed with a hope of worldly compensation. With them there is no ambition to gratify, no fame to be gained by the simply negative virtue of privations suffered in silence. There is no action to drown in its noise and bustle a full sense of the pain that must inevitably attend it. The lot of woman, in times of trouble, is to be a passive spectator of events, which she can scarcely hope to make subservient to her own fame, or to control.

If it were possible to get at the expression of feelings by women in the heart of a community, at a moment of extraordinary trial, recorded in a shape evidently designed to be secret and confidential, this would seem to present the surest and most unfailing index to its general character. Hitherto we have not gathered much of this material in the United States. The dispersion of families, so common in America, the consequent destruction of private papers, the defective nature of female education before the Revolution, the difficulty and danger of free communication, and the engrossing character, to the men, of public, and to the women, of domestic cares, have all contributed to cut short, if not completely to destroy, the sources of information. It is truly remarked, in the present collection, that "instances of patience, perseverance, fortitude, magnanimity, courage, humanity, and tenderness, which would have graced the Roman character, were known only to those who were themselves the actors, and whose modesty could not suffer them to blazon abroad their own fame."<sup>1</sup> The heroism of the females of the Revolution has gone from memory with the generation that witnessed it, and nothing, absolutely nothing, remains upon the ear of the young of the present day, but the faint echo of an expiring general tradition. Neither is

<sup>1</sup> Letter, 4 March, 1786, p. 277.



there much remembrance of the domestic manners of the last century, when, with more of admitted distinctions than at present, there was more of general equality; nor of the state of social feeling, or of that simplicity of intercourse, which, in colonial times, constituted in New England as near an approach to the successful exemplification of the democratic theory, as the irregularity in the natural gifts of men will, in all probability, ever practically allow.

It is the purpose of this volume to contribute something to supply the deficiency, by giving to tradition a palpable form. The present is believed to be the first attempt, in the United States, to lay before the public a series of private letters, written without the remotest idea of publication, by a woman, to her husband, and others of her nearest and dearest relations. Their greatest value consists in the fact, susceptible of no misconception, that they furnish an exact transcript of the feelings of the writer, in times of no ordinary trial. Independently of this, the variety of scenes in which she wrote, and the opportunities furnished for observation in the situations in which she was placed by the elevation of her husband to high official positions in the country, may contribute to sustain the interest with which they will be read. The undertaking is, nevertheless, somewhat novel and perhaps adventurous, since it brings forward to public notice a person who has now been long removed from the scene of action, and of whom, it is not unreasonable to suppose, the present generation of readers can have neither personal knowledge nor recollection. For the sake of facilitating their progress, and explaining the allusions to persons and objects very frequently occurring, it may not be deemed improper here to premise some account of her life.

There were few persons of her day and generation, who derived their origin, or imbibed their character, more exclusively from the genuine stock of the Massachusetts Puritan settlers, than Abigail Smith. Her father, the Reverend William Smith, was the settled minister of the Congregational Church at Weymouth, for more than forty years, and

until his death. Her mother, Elizabeth Quincy, was the grand-daughter of the Reverend John Norton, long the pastor of a church of the same denomination in the neighbouring town of Hingham, and the nephew of John Norton, well known in the annals of the colony.<sup>1</sup> Her maternal grandfather, John Quincy, was the grandson of Thomas Shepard, minister of Charlestown, distinguished in his day, the son of the more distinguished Thomas Shepard of Cambridge, whose name still lives in one of the churches of that town. These are persons whose merits may be found fully recorded in the pages of Mather and of Neal. They were among the most noted of the most reputed class of their day. In a colony, founded so exclusively upon motives of religious zeal as Massachusetts was, it necessarily followed, that the ordinary distinctions of society were in a great degree subverted, and that the leaders of the church, though without worldly possessions to boast of, were the most in honor everywhere. Education was promoted only as it was subsidiary to the great end of studying or expounding the Scriptures ; and whatever of advance was made in the intellectual pursuits of society, was rather the incidental than the direct result of studies necessary to fit men for a holy calling. Hence it was, that the higher departments of knowledge were entered almost exclusively by the clergy. Classical learning was a natural, though indirect consequence of the acquisition of those languages, in which the New Testament and the Fathers were to be studied ; and dialectics formed the armour, of which men were compelled to learn the use, as a preparation for the wars of religious controversy. The mastery of these gave power and authority to their possessors, who, by a very natural transition, passed from being the guides of religious faith to their fellow-men, to be guardians of their education. To them, as the fountains of knowledge, and possessing the gifts most prized in the community, all other ranks in society cheerfully gave place. If a festive entertainment was meditated,

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson, Vol. I. pp. 220, *et seq.*



the minister was sure to be first on the list of those to be invited. If any assembly of citizens was held, he must be there to open the business with prayer. If a political measure was in agitation, he was among the first whose opinion was to be consulted. Even the civil rights of the other citizens for a long time depended, in some degree, upon his good word ; and, after this rigid rule was laid aside, he yet continued, in the absence of technical law and lawyers, to be the arbiter and the judge in the differences between his fellow-men. He was not infrequently the family physician. The great object of instruction being religious, the care of the young was also in his hands. The records of Harvard University, the darling child of Puritan affections, show that out of all the presiding officers, during the century and a half of colonial days, but two were laymen, and not ministers of the prevailing denomination ; and that out of all, who, in the early times, availed themselves of such advantages as this institution could then offer, nearly half the number did so for the sake of devoting themselves to the service of the gospel.

But the prevailing notion of the purpose of education was attended with one remarkable consequence. The cultivation of the female mind was regarded with utter indifference. It is not impossible, that the early example of Mrs. Hutchinson, and the difficulties in which the public exercise of her gifts involved the colony, had established in the general mind a conviction of the danger that may attend the meddling of women with abstruse points of doctrine ; and these, however they might confound the strongest intellect, were, nevertheless, the favorite topics of thought and discussion in that generation. Waving a decision upon this, it may very safely be assumed, not only that there was very little attention given to the education of women, but that, as Mrs. Adams, in one of her letters,<sup>1</sup> says, "It was fashionable to ridicule female learning." The only chance for much intellectual improvement in the female sex was,

<sup>1</sup> Page 99.

therefore, to be found in the families of that, which was the educated class, and in occasional intercourse with the learned of their day. Whatever of useful instruction was received in the practical conduct of life, came from maternal lips; and what of further mental development, depended more upon the eagerness with which the casual teachings of daily conversation were treasured up, than upon any labor expended purposely to promote it.

Abigail Smith was the second of three daughters. Her father, as has been already mentioned, was the minister of a small Congregational Church in the town of Weymouth, during the middle of the last century. She was born in that town, on the 11th of November, 1744, O. S. In her neighbourhood, there were not many advantages of instruction to be found; and even in Boston, the small metropolis near at hand, for reasons already stated, the list of accomplishments within the reach of females was, probably, very short. She did not enjoy an opportunity to acquire even such as there might have been, for the delicate state of her health forbade the idea of sending her away from home to obtain them. In a letter, written in 1817, the year before her death, speaking of her own deficiencies, she says: "My early education did not partake of the abundant opportunities which the present days offer, and which even our common country schools now afford. *I never was sent to any school.* I was always sick. Female education, in the best families, went no further than writing and arithmetic; in some few and rare instances, music and dancing." Hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that the knowledge gained was picked up by her as an eager gatherer from the society into which she was thrown, rather than acquired from any systematic instruction.

This fact, that the author of the letters in the present volume never went to any school, is a very important one to a proper estimate of her character. For, whatever may be the decision of the long-vexed question between the advantages of public and those of private education, few persons will deny, that they produce marked differences in the

formation of character. Seclusion from companions of the same age, at any time of life, is calculated to develop the imaginative faculty, at the expense of the judgment ; but especially in youth, when the most durable impressions are making. The ordinary consequence, in females of a meditative turn of mind, is the indulgence of romantic and exaggerated sentiments drawn from books, which, if subjected to the ordinary routine of large schools, become worn down by the attrition of social intercourse. These ideas, formed in solitude, in early life, often remain in the mind, even after the realities of the world surround those who hold them, and perpetually modify their conclusions. They are constantly visible, in the letters of this volume, even in the midst of the severest trials. They form what may be considered the romantic turn of the author's mind ; but, in her case, they were so far affected by a great infusion of religious principle and of natural good sense, as to become of eminent service in sustaining her through the painful situations in which she was placed, instead of nursing that species of sickly sensibility, which too frequently, in similar circumstances, impairs, if it does not destroy, all power of practical usefulness.

At Mount Wollaston, a part of Braintree, the town adjoining Weymouth, lived Colonel John Quincy, her grandfather on the mother's side, and a gentleman, who, for very many years, enjoyed, in various official situations, much of the confidence of the Colony. At his house, and under the instruction of his wife, her grandmother, she appears to have imbibed most of the lessons which made the deepest impression upon her mind. Of this lady, the daughter of the Reverend John Norton, nothing is now known, but what the frequent and cheerful acknowledgment of her merit, by her disciple, tells us. "I have not forgotten," says the latter to her own daughter, in the year 1795, "the excellent lessons which I received from my grandmother, at a very early period of life. I frequently think they made a more durable impression upon my mind, than those which I received from my own parents. Whether it was owing to



the happy method of mixing instruction and amusement together, or from an inflexible adherence to certain principles, the utility of which I could not but see and approve when a child, I know not; but maturer years have rendered them oracles of wisdom to me. I love and revere her memory; her lively, cheerful disposition animated all around her, whilst she edified all by her unaffected piety. This tribute is due to the memory of those virtues, the sweet remembrance of which will flourish, though she has long slept with her ancestors." Again, in another letter to the same person, in 1808, she says; "I cherish her memory with holy veneration, whose maxims I have treasured up, whose virtues live in my remembrance; happy if I could say, they have been transplanted into my life."

But, though her early years were spent in a spot of so great seclusion as her grandfather's house must then have been, it does not appear that she remained wholly unacquainted with young persons of her own sex and age. She had relations and connexions, both on the father's and the mother's side; and with these she was upon as intimate terms as circumstances would allow. The distance between the homes of the young people was, however, too great, and the means of their parents too narrow, to admit of very frequent personal intercourse; the substitute for which was a rapid interchange of written communications. The letter-writing propensity manifested itself early in this youthful circle. A considerable number of the epistles of her correspondents have been preserved among the papers of Mrs. Adams. They are deserving of notice only as they furnish a general idea of the tastes and pursuits of the young women of that day. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about them is the evident influence upon the writers, which the study of "The Spectator," and of the poets, appears to have had. This is perceptible in the more important train of thought and structure of language, not less than in the trifles of a taste for quotation and for fictitious signatures. Calliope and Myra, Arpasia and Aurelia, have effectually succeeded in disguising their true names from the eyes of



all but the most curious inquirers. The signature of Miss Smith appears to have been *Diana*, a name which she dropped after her marriage, without losing the fancy that prompted its selection. Her letters, during the Revolution, show clearly enough the tendency of her own thoughts and feelings in the substitute, she then adopted, of *Portia*. Her fondness for quotations, the fashion of that day, it will be seen, was maintained through life.

Perhaps there is no species of exercise, in early life, more productive of results useful to the mind, than that of writing letters. Over and above the mechanical facility of constructing sentences, which no teaching will afford so well, the interest with which the object is commonly pursued, gives an extraordinary impulse to the intellect. This is promoted, in a degree proportionate to the scarcity of temporary and local subjects for discussion. Where there is little gossip, the want of it must be supplied from books. The flowers of literature spring up where the weeds of scandal take no root. The young ladies of Massachusetts, in the last century, were certainly readers, even though only self-taught; and their taste was not for the feeble and nerveless sentiment, or the frantic passion, which comes from the novels and romances in the circulating library of our day, but was derived from the deepest wells of English literature. The poets and moralists of the mother country furnished to these inquiring minds their ample stores, and they were used to an extent, which it is at least doubtful if the more pretending and elaborate instruction of the present generation would equal.

Of Mrs. Adams's letters during this period of her youth, but very few remain in possession of her descendants. One specimen has been accidentally obtained, which makes the first in the present publication. The writer was, at the date of the letter, not quite seventeen, and was addressing a lady some years older than herself. This may account for a strain of gravity rather beyond her years or ordinary disposition. One other letter, written to Mr. Adams, after she was betrothed, and before she was married to him, has been

added, because it is believed to be more indicative of her usual temper at that age. These have been admitted to a place in the selection, not so much as claiming a particular merit, as because they are thought to furnish a standard of her mind, and general character, when a girl, by which the improvement and full development of her powers as a woman may readily be measured.

The father of Mrs. Adams was a pious man, with something of that vein of humor, not uncommon among the clergy of New England, which ordinarily found such a field for exercise as is displayed in the pages of Cotton Mather. He was the father of three daughters, all of them women of uncommon force of intellect, though the fortunes of two of them confined its influence to a sphere much more limited than that which fell to the lot of Mrs. Adams. Mary, the eldest, was married, in 1762, to Richard Cranch, an English emigrant, who had settled at Germantown, a part of Braintree, and who subsequently became a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Massachusetts, and died, highly respected, in the early part of the present century. The present William Cranch, of Washington, who has presided so long, and with so much dignity and fidelity, over the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia, is the son of this marriage. Elizabeth, the youngest, was twice married; first, to the Reverend John Shaw, minister of Haverhill, in Massachusetts, and, after his death, to the Reverend Mr. Peabody, of Atkinson, New Hampshire. Thus much is necessary to be stated, in order to explain the relations, which the parties, in many of the letters, bore to each other. It is an anecdote told of Mr. Smith, that upon the marriage of his eldest daughter, he preached to his people from the text in the forty-second verse of the tenth chapter of Luke, "And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Two years elapsed, and his second daughter, the subject of this notice, was about to marry John Adams, then a lawyer in good practice, when some disapprobation of the match appears to have manifested itself among a portion of his parishioners.



The profession of law was, for a long period in the colonial history of Massachusetts, unknown; and, after circumstances had called it forth, the prejudices of the inhabitants, who thought it a calling hardly honest, were arrayed against those who adopted it. There are many still living, who can remember how strong they remained, even down to the time of the adoption of the present Federal Constitution; and the discussions in the General Court often show, that they have not quite disappeared at this day. Besides this, the family of Mr. Adams, the son of a small farmer of the middle class in Braintree, was thought scarcely good enough to match with the minister's daughter, descended from so many of the shining lights of the colony. It is probable, that Mr. Smith was made aware of the opinions expressed among his people, for he is said, immediately after the marriage took place, to have replied to them by a sermon, the text of which, in evident allusion to the objection against lawyers, was drawn from Luke vii. 33; "For John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, *He hath a devil.*"<sup>1</sup>

[Mrs. Adams was married on the 25th of October, 1764, having then nearly completed her twentieth year. The ten years immediately following present little that is worth recording. She appears to have passed a quiet, and apparently very happy life, having her residence in Braintree, or in Boston, according as the state of her husband's health, then rather impaired, or that of his large professional practice, demanded the change. Within this period she became the mother of a daughter, and of three sons, whose names will frequently appear in her letters; and her domestic cares were relieved by the presence of her husband, who was absent from home only upon those occasions, when he, with the other lawyers of his time, was compelled to follow

<sup>1</sup> As this anecdote rests entirely upon tradition, it has been differently told; and it is here admitted in this form rather as a characteristic feature of the age, and of the individual, than from any positive reliance upon its accuracy. There are yet transmitted, among the inhabitants of Weymouth and Hingham, many stories of Mr. Smith's application of texts, in a similar manner, to the events of the Revolution, which render the truth of it highly likely.

the court in its circuits. During these times, he used to write regularly to his wife, an account of his adventures and of his professional success. These letters remain, and furnish a curious record of the manners and customs of the provincial times. She does not appear to have often replied to them. The only example is given in the present volume, and makes the third of the selection ; a letter, remarkable only for the picture it presents of peaceful domestic life, in contrast to the stormy period immediately succeeding.

It is said by Governor Hutchinson, in the third volume of his History, that neither the health of Mr. Adams, nor his business, admitted of his constant application to public affairs in the manner that distinguished his kinsman, Samuel Adams, during the years preceding the breaking out of the Revolution. If the sum of that application is to be measured by the frequency of his appearance before the public as an actor in an official character upon the scene, the remark is true ; for, up to the year 1774, he had served but once or twice as a representative in the General Court, and in no other situation. But this would furnish a very unfair standard, by which to try the extent of his labors for the public. Very often, as much is done by beforehand preparing the public mind for action, as by the conduct of that action after it has been commenced ; although the visible amount of exertion, by which alone the world forms its judgments, is in the two cases widely different. From the time of his marriage, in 1764, perhaps still earlier, when he, as a young lawyer, in 1761, took notes of the argument in the celebrated cause of the Writs of Assistance, there is evidence constantly presented of his active interest in the Revolutionary struggle. There is hardly a year in the interval between the earliest of these dates, and 1774, that the traces of his hand are not visible in the newspapers of Boston, elaborately discussing the momentous questions, which preceded the crisis. It was during this period, that the " Essay on Canon and Feudal Law " was written. A long controversy with Major Brattle, upon the payment of the judges, and the papers of " Novanglus,"



were other, though by no means all, the results of his labors. He drafted several of the papers of Instructions to the Representatives to the General Court, both in Boston and in his native town, and also some of the most elaborate legal portions of the celebrated controversy between that body and Governor Hutchinson. The tendency, which all these papers show, to seek for political truth in its fundamental principles and most abstract forms, whilst it takes off much from the interest with which the merely general reader would now consider them, is yet of historical importance, as establishing the fact, how little of mere impulse there was in his mode of action against the mother country. They also show the extent of the studies to which his mind applied itself, and the depth of the foundation laid by him for his subsequent career. Yet, during all this time, his professional labors were never intermitted, and ceased only with the catastrophe which shut up the courts of justice, and rendered exertion upon a different theatre absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the fabric of society.

Perhaps the preceding detail belongs more properly to a memoir of Mr. Adams, than to that of his wife. Yet it would be impossible to furnish any accurate idea of her character, without explaining the precise nature of the influences acting upon her, whilst still young, and when that character was taking its permanent form. [There was no one, who witnessed his studies with greater interest, or who sympathized with him in the conclusions, to which his mind was forcing him, more deeply, than Mrs. Adams. And hence it was, that, as the day of trial came, and the hour for action drew near, she was found not unprepared to submit to the lot appointed her. Mr. Adams was elected one of the delegates on the part of Massachusetts, instructed to meet persons chosen in the same manner from the other colonies, for the purpose of consulting in common upon the course most advisable to be adopted by them. In the month of August, 1774, he left home, in company with Samuel Adams, Thomas Cushing, and Robert Treat Paine, to go to Philadelphia, at which place the proposed assembly was to

be held. It is from this period, that the correspondence, Mrs. Adams's portion of which is now submitted to the public, becomes interesting. The letter of the 19th of August of this year<sup>1</sup> portrays her own feelings upon this, the first separation of importance from her husband, and the anxiety with which she was watching the course of events. Yet there is in it not a syllable of regret for the past, or of fear for the future; but, on the contrary, an acute perception of the obstacles in the way of an immediate return to peaceful times, and a deliberate preparation, by reading and reflection, for the worst. The Congress confined itself, in its first sessions, to consultation and remonstrance. It therefore adjourned after the lapse of only two months. It is during this time, that the five letters in the present volume which bear date in 1774, were written. They furnish a lively picture of the state of public feeling in Massachusetts. That dated on the 14th of September, is particularly interesting, as it gives an account of the securing the gunpowder from the British, in her own town of Braintree, as well as a highly characteristic trait of New England, in the refusal to cheer on a Sunday. The last of this series, dated on the 16th of October, shows that all remaining hopes of peace and reconciliation were fast vanishing from her mind; and in an affecting manner she "bids adieu to domestic felicity perhaps until the meeting with her husband in another world, since she looks forward to nothing further in this than sacrifices, as the result of the impending contest."<sup>2</sup>

The second meeting of the Congress, which took place in May, 1775, was marked by events which wholly changed the nature of its deliberations. Up to that period, the struggle had been only a dispute. It then took the more fearful shape of a war. Mr. Adams left his house and family at Braintree on the 14th of April, only five days before the memorable incident at Lexington, which was a signal for the final appeal to arms. The news of the affair reached

<sup>1</sup> Page 11.<sup>2</sup> Page 21.



him at Hartford, on his way to Philadelphia. General Gage had planned his attack upon Lexington with the knowledge that John Hancock and Samuel Adams, two of the delegates to the general Congress, were in that place at the time ; and it was probably one of his objects to seize them, if they could be found. Gordon, the historian, attributes their escape only to a friendly warning given them by a woman residing in Boston, but "unequally yoked in politics." There was nearly the same reason for apprehension on the part of John Adams. His house was situated still nearer to Boston, could be more easily approached by water, and his family, if not he himself, was known to be residing there. Under these circumstances, what the feelings of Mrs. Adams, left with the care of four small children, the eldest not ten years of age, must have been, may readily be conceived. But the letters, in which she describes them, bring the idea home to the mind with still greater force. She tells us, that, upon the separation from her husband, "her heart had felt like a heart of lead," and that "she never trusts herself long with the terrors that sometimes intrude themselves upon her ;" that "since the never-to-be-forgotten day of his departure, the 14th of April, nothing had agitated her so much as the news of the arrival of recruits ;" and that, "she lives in continual expectation of alarms." Neither were these apprehensions altogether groundless. The letter of the 4th of May mentions that Colonel Quincy's family, whose residence was nearer to the water-side than hers, had taken refuge for one night with her. That of the 24th, gives a highly vivid picture of the consternation into which the whole town was thrown by a party of British, foraging upon an island in the harbour, close upon the town. Then follow the account of the battle on Bunker's Hill, and the burning of Charlestown, dreadful events to those in the immediate vicinity of Boston and to herself ; yet, in the midst of them, the writer adds, that she is "distressed, but not dismayed," and that "she has been able to maintain a calmness and presence of mind, and

hopes she shall, let the exigency of the time be what it will." <sup>1</sup>

But it is superfluous to endeavour to heighten the picture given in the letters with so much distinctness. Mr. Adams seems to have been startled on the arrival of the intelligence at Hartford. Conscious, however, that his return would rather tend to add to, than diminish, the hazard to which his family was exposed, he contented himself with writing encouragement, and, at the same time, his directions in case of positive danger. "In a cause which interests the whole globe," he says, "at a time when my friends and country are in such keen distress, I am scarcely ever interrupted in the least degree by apprehensions for my personal safety. I am often concerned for you and our dear babes, surrounded, as you are, by people who are too timorous, and too much susceptible of alarms. Many fears and jealousies and imaginary evils will be suggested to you, but I hope you will not be impressed by them. In case of real danger, of which you cannot fail to have previous intimations, fly to the woods with our children." <sup>2</sup>

Mr. Adams very well knew to whom he was recommending such an appalling alternative, the very idea of which would have been intolerable to many women. The trial Mrs. Adams was called to undergo from the fears of those immediately around her, was one in addition to that caused by her own apprehensions; a trial, it may be remarked, of no ordinary nature. It is the tendency of women in general, to suffer quite as much anxiety from the activity of the imagination, as if it was, in every instance, founded upon reasonable cause. To overcome it, demands the exercise of a presence of mind and accuracy of judgment in distinguishing the false from the true, that falls to the lot of few even of the stronger sex.

But the sufferings of this remarkable year were not limited to the mind alone. The terrors of war were ac-

<sup>1</sup> Pages 24 — 32.

<sup>2</sup> This letter will be found entire in the collection of Mr. Adams, published in 1841, under date 2 May, 1775.



accompanied with the ravages of pestilence. Mr. Adams was at home during the period of adjournment of the Congress, which was only for the month of August; but scarcely had he crossed his threshold, when the dysentery, a disease which had already signified its approach in scattering instances about the neighbourhood of the besieged town of Boston where it had commenced, assumed a highly epidemic character, and marked its victims in every family. A younger brother of Mr. Adams had fallen among the earliest in the town; but it was not till his departure for Philadelphia, that almost every member of his own household was seized. The letters written during the month of September, 1775, besides being exclusively personal, are too uniformly mournful in their tone to be suitable for insertion in full in the present collection; yet it would be failing to give an accurate idea of the character of Mrs. Adams, to omit a notice of them altogether. A few extracts, reserved for this personal narrative, have been thought likely to answer the purpose better than if they were submitted in full to the public eye.

On the 8th of September, she commences thus :

“ Since you left me, I have passed through great distress both of body and mind; and whether greater is to be my portion, Heaven only knows. You may remember Isaac was unwell when you went from home. His disorder increased, until a violent dysentery was the consequence of his complaints. There was no resting-place in the house for his terrible groans. He continued in this state nearly one week, when his disorder abated, and we have now hopes of his recovery. Two days after he was sick, I was seized in a violent manner. Had I known you were at Watertown, I should have sent Bracket for you. I suffered greatly between my inclination to have you return, and my fear of sending, lest you should be a partaker of the common calamity. After three days, an abatement of my disease relieved me from that anxiety. The next person in the same week, was Susy; her we carried home, and hope she will not be very bad. Our little Tommy was the next,

and he lies very ill now. Yesterday Patty was seized. Our house is a hospital in every part, and, what with my own weakness and distress of mind for my family, I have been unhappy enough. And such is the distress of the neighbourhood, that I can scarcely find a well person to assist me in looking after the sick."

On the 16th, after saying that her letter will be only a bill of mortality, and that, of all the members of her household, one only had escaped the disorder, she adds ;

"The dread upon the minds of the people of catching the distemper is almost as great as if it was the small-pox. I have been distressed, more than ever I was in my life, to procure watchers and to get assistance. We have been four Sabbaths without any meeting. Thus does pestilence travel in the rear of war, to remind us of our entire dependence upon that Being, who not only directeth the 'arrow by day,' but has also at His command 'the pestilence which walketh in darkness.' So uncertain and so transitory are all the enjoyments of life, that, were it not for the tender connexions which bind us, would it not be a folly to wish for a continuance here ? "

On the 25th, she mentions the illness of her mother.

"I sit down with a heavy heart to write to you. I have had no other since you left me. Woe follows woe, and one affliction treads upon the heels of another. My distress in my own family having in some measure abated, it is excited anew upon that of my dear mother. Her kindness brought her to see me every day when I was ill, and our little Thomas. She has taken the disorder, and lies so bad, that we have little hope of her recovery."

On the 29th ;

"It is allotted me to go from the sick and almost dying bed of one of the best of parents, to my own habitation, where again I behold the same scene, only varied by a remoter connexion,

'A bitter change, severer for severe.'

You can more easily conceive than I describe, what are the



sensations of my heart when absent from either, continually expecting a messenger with the fatal tidings."

Then follows the letter of the 1st of October, which, as making the climax of her distress, is inserted at length in this volume.<sup>1</sup> The following week, Patty, the female domestic mentioned as the other sick person, also died; after which, there appears to have been no return of the disease. But among all the trying scenes of the war of the Revolution, it is doubtful whether any much exceeded this.

"The desolation of war is not so distressing," she writes, "as the havoc made by the pestilence. Some poor parents are mourning the loss of three, four, and five children; and some families are wholly stripped of every member."

Such as these are the kinds of trial, of which history takes little or no note, yet in which female fortitude is most severely exercised. Without designing to detract from the unquestioned merit of that instrument, it must nevertheless be affirmed, that the Declaration of Independence, called by the celebrated John Randolph, "a fanfaronade of abstractions," might very naturally be expected to reward the efforts of its signers with a crown of immortality; whilst the large share of the cost of maintaining it, wrung from the bleeding hearts of the women of the Revolution, was paid without any hope or expectation of a similar compensation.

Mr. Adams was again at home in the month of December, during the sessions of the Congress, which were now continued without intermission. It was upon his departure for the third time, that the long and very remarkable letter, bearing date March 2d, 1776,<sup>2</sup> and continued through several days, was written; a letter composed in the midst of the din of war, and describing hopes and fears in a manner deeply interesting. With this the description of active scenes in the war terminates. The British force soon afterwards evacuated Boston and Massachusetts, which did not again become the field of military action. The correspon-

<sup>1</sup> Page 52.

<sup>2</sup> Page 67.



dence now changes its character. From containing accounts of stirring events directly under the writer's eye, the letters assume a more private form, and principally relate to the management of the farm and the household. Few of these would be likely to amuse the general reader; yet some are necessary, as specimens of a portion of the author's character. Mr. Adams was never a man of large fortune. His profession, which had been a source of emolument, was now entirely taken away from him; and his only dependence for the support of his family was in the careful husbanding of the means in actual possession. It is not giving to his wife too much credit to affirm, that by her prudence through the years of the Revolution, and indeed during the whole period when the attention of her husband was engrossed by public affairs, she saved him from the mortification in his last days, which some of those who have been, like him, elevated to the highest situations in the country, have, for want of such care, not altogether escaped.

In the month of November, 1777, Mr. Adams again visited his home, and never afterwards rejoined the Congress; for that body, in his absence, had elected him to perform a duty in a distant land. This was destined to furnish a severe trial to the fortitude of Mrs. Adams. On the 25th of October, she had written a letter to him, it being the anniversary of their wedding-day, in which she notices the fact, that "out of thirteen years of their married life, three had been passed in a state of separation." Yet in these years, the distance between them had never been very great, and the means of communication almost always reasonably speedy and certain. She appears little to have anticipated, that in a few short weeks she was to be deprived of even these compensations, and to send her husband to a foreign country, over seas covered with the enemy's ships. "I very well remember," she says, in an earlier letter, "when the eastern circuits of the courts, which lasted a month, were thought an age, and an absence of three months, intolerable; but we are carried from

step to step, and from one degree to another, to endure that which first we think insupportable." It was in exact accordance with this process, that the separations of half a year or more were to be followed by those which lasted many years, and the distance from Boston to Philadelphia or Baltimore was lengthened to Paris and a different quarter of the globe. Upon the reception of the news of his appointment as joint commissioner at the court of France, in the place of Silas Deane, Mr. Adams lost no time in making his arrangements for the voyage. But it was impossible for him to think of risking his wife and children all at once with him in so perilous an enterprise. The frigate *Boston*, a small, and not very good vessel, mounting twenty-eight guns, had been ordered to transport him to his destination. The British fleet, stationed at Newport, perfectly well knew the circumstances under which she was going, and was on the watch to favor the new commissioner with a fate similar to that afterwards experienced by Mr. Laurens. The political attitude of France still remained equivocal. Hence, on every account, it seemed advisable that Mr. Adams should go upon his mission alone. He left the shores of his native town to embark in the frigate, in February, 1778, accompanied only by his eldest son, John Quincy Adams, then a boy not eleven years of age.

It is not often that, even upon that boisterous ocean, a voyage combines greater perils of war and of the elements, than did this of the *Boston*. Yet it is by no means unlikely, that the lightning which struck the frigate, and the winds that nearly sent it to the bottom, were effective instruments to deter the enemy from a pursuit which threatened to end in capture. This is not, however, the place to enlarge upon this story. It is alluded to only as connected with the uneasiness experienced by Mrs. Adams, who was left alone to meditate upon the hazard to which her husband was exposed. Her letter, written not long after the sailing of the frigate, distinctly shows her feelings.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Page 90.

we find by it, that, to all the causes for anxiety which would naturally have occurred to her mind, there was superadded one growing out of a rumor then in circulation, that some British emissary had made an attempt upon the life of Dr. Franklin, whilst acting at Paris in the very commission, of which her husband had been made a part. This was a kind of apprehension as new as it was distressing ; one too, the vague nature of which tended infinitely to multiply those terrors that had a better foundation in reality.

The news of the surrender of General Burgoyne had done more to hasten the desired acknowledgment, by France, of the independence of the United States, than all the efforts which Commissioners could have made. Upon his arrival in France, Mr. Adams found the great object of his mission accomplished, and himself, consequently, left with little or no occupation. He did not wait in Europe to know the further wishes of Congress, but returned home in August, 1779. Only a brief enjoyment of his society by his family was the result, inasmuch as in October he was again ordered by Congress to go to Europe, and there to wait until Great Britain should manifest an inclination to treat with him, and terminate the war. In obedience to these directions, he sailed in November on board of the French frigate *Sensible*, taking with him upon this occasion his two eldest sons. The day of his embarkation is marked by a letter in the present collection, quite touching in its character.<sup>1</sup>

The ordinary occupations of the female sex are necessarily of a kind which must ever prevent it from partaking largely of the action of life. However keenly women may think or feel, there is seldom an occasion when the sphere of their exertions can with propriety be extended much beyond the domestic hearth or the social circle. Exactly here are they to be seen most in their glory. Three or four years passed whilst Mrs. Adams was living in the utmost seclusion of country life, during which, on account

<sup>1</sup> Page 110.



of the increasing vigilance of British cruisers, she very seldom heard from her husband. The material for interesting letters was proportionately small, and yet there was no time when she was more usefully occupied. It is impossible to omit all notice of this period, however deficient it may prove in variety. The depreciation of the Continental paper money, the difficulties in the way of managing the property of her husband, her own isolation, and the course of public events in distant parts of the country, form her constant topics. Only a small number of the letters which discuss them, yet enough to show her situation at this period, have been admitted into this volume. They are remarkable, because they display the readiness with which she could devote herself to the most opposite duties, and the cheerful manner in which she could accommodate herself to the difficulties of the times. She is a farmer cultivating the land, and discussing the weather and the crops; a merchant reporting prices-current and the rates of exchange, and directing the making up of invoices; a politician speculating upon the probabilities of peace or war; and a mother writing the most exalted sentiments to her son. All of these pursuits she adopts together; some from choice, the rest from the necessity of the case; and in all she appears equally well. Yet, among the letters of this period, there will be found two or three, which rise in their tone very far above the rest, and which can scarcely fail to awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.<sup>1</sup>

The signature of the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, which fully established the Independence of the United States, did not terminate the residence of Mr. Adams in Europe. He was ordered by Congress to remain there, and, in conjunction with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jefferson, to establish by treaty commercial relations with foreign powers. And not long afterwards a new commission was sent him as the first representative of the nation to him who had been their King. The duties prescribed seemed likely to require

<sup>1</sup> Pages 132, 134, 136.

a residence sufficiently long to authorize him in a request that Mrs. Adams should join him in Europe. After some hesitation, she finally consented; and, in June, 1784, she sailed from Boston in a merchant vessel bound to London. The journal of her voyage, given in a letter to her sister, Mrs. Cranch, makes a part of the present collection.<sup>1</sup> From this date the correspondence assumes a new character. Mrs. Adams found herself, at the age of forty, suddenly transplanted into a scene wholly new. From a life of the utmost retirement, in a small and quiet country town of New England, she was at once transferred to the busy and bustling scenes of the populous and wealthy cities of Europe. Not only was her position novel to herself, but there had been nothing like it among her countrywomen. She was the first representative of her sex from the United States at the Court of Great Britain. The impressions made upon her mind were therefore received when it was uncommonly open, and free from the ordinary restraints which an established routine of precedents is apt to create. Her residence in France during the first year of her European experience appears to have been much enjoyed, notwithstanding the embarrassment felt by her in not speaking the language. That in England, which lasted three years, was somewhat affected by the temper of the sovereign. George and his Queen could not get over the mortification attending the loss of the American Colonies, nor at all times suppress the manifestation of it, when the presence of the Minister forced the subject on their recollection. Mrs. Adams's account of her presentation is among the letters of this period.<sup>2</sup> It was not more than civilly met on the part of the Queen, whose subsequent conduct was hardly so good as on that occasion. Mrs. Adams appears never to have forgotten it; for at a much later period, when, in consequence of the French Revolution, the throne of England was thought to be in danger, she writes to her daughter with regret at the prospect for the country, but without

<sup>1</sup> Page 157.<sup>2</sup> 24 June, 1785. Page 251.

sympathy for the Queen. "Humiliation for Charlotte," she says, "is no sorrow for me. She richly deserves her full portion for the contempt and scorn which she took pains to discover." Of course, the courtiers followed the lead thus given to them, and the impression made against America at the very outset of its national career has hardly been effaced down to this day. It is to be observed, however, that one circumstance contributed to operate against the situation of the first American minister to Great Britain, which has affected none of his successors. This was the conduct of the States whilst yet under the Confederation, justifying the general impression that they were incapable of the self-government, the right to which they had so zealously fought to obtain. Of the effect of this upon herself, Mrs. Adams will be found frequently to speak.

Yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, she seems to have enjoyed her residence in the mother country. Her letters to her sisters during this period have been admitted almost *in extenso* in the present volume. They describe no scenes of particular novelty to the reading public, it is true; but they delineate in so natural and easy a manner the impressions received from objects new to the writer, that it is hoped they will fully reward perusal. The period was not without its peculiar character to Americans. Their country, exhausted by her efforts in the war of Independence, had not yet put herself in the way of restoration by adopting a good form of government. It was even a matter of doubt whether her liberty was likely to prove a blessing, or to degenerate into a curse. On the other hand, France, Holland, and Great Britain respectively presented an outward spectacle of wealth and prosperity not perceptibly impaired by the violent struggle between them that had just terminated. This contrast is frequently marked in the letters of Mrs. Adams; but the perception of it does not appear to have in any degree qualified the earnestness of her attachment to her own very modest home. "Whatever is to be the fate of our country," she says to her sister, "we



have determined to come home and share it with you.”<sup>1</sup> She had very little of that susceptibility of transfer, which is a characteristic, not less of the cultivated and wealthy class of our countrymen, who cling to the luxury of the old world, than of the adventurous and hardy sons of labor, who carve out for themselves a new home in the forests of the West.

The return of Mr. Adams, with his family, to the United States, the liberty for which was granted by Congress to his own request, was simultaneous with the adoption of the present Constitution by the decision of the ratifying Conventions. Upon the organization of the government under the new form, he was elected to fill the office of Vice-President, that of President being, by a more general consent, awarded to General Washington. By this arrangement, a residence at the seat of government during the sessions of the Senate was made necessary; and, as that was fixed first at New York, and then at Philadelphia, Mrs. Adams enjoyed an opportunity to mix freely with the society of both places. Some of her letters descriptive of it have been selected for publication in this collection.

The voluntary retirement of General Washington, at the end of eight years, from the Presidency, was the signal for the great struggle between the two political parties, which had been rapidly maturing their organization, during his term of administration. Mr. Adams was elected his successor by a bare majority of the electoral colleges, and against the inclinations of one section even of that party which supported him. The open defection of that section, at the following election, turned the scale against him, and brought Mr. Jefferson into his place. Of course, the letters of Mrs. Adams, at this period, largely partake of the excitement of the day. From early life, she had learnt to take a deep interest in the course of political affairs, and it is not to be supposed that this would decline, whilst her husband was a chief actor in the scene, and a butt for the

<sup>1</sup> 25 February, 1787. Page 317.

most malignant shafts which party animosity could throw. As it is not the design of this publication to revive any old disputes, most of these letters have been excluded from it. Two or three exceptions, however, have been made. The first is the letter of the 8th of February, 1797, the day upon which the votes for President were counted, and Mr. Adams, as Vice-President, was required by law to announce himself the President elect for the ensuing term. This, though extremely short, appears to the Editor to be the gem of the collection; for the exalted feeling of the moment shines out with all the lustre of ancient patriotism. Perhaps there is not, among the whole number of her letters, one which, in its spirit, brings so strongly to mind, as this does, the celebrated Roman lady, whose signature she at one time assumed; whilst it is chastened by a sentiment of Christian humility, of which ancient history furnishes no example.

At this time, the health of Mrs. Adams, which had never been very firm, began decidedly to fail. Her residence at Philadelphia had not been favorable, as it had subjected her to the attack of an intermittent fever, from the effects of which she was never afterwards perfectly free. The desire to enjoy the bracing air of her native climate, as well as to keep together the private property of her husband, upon which she early foresaw that he would be obliged to rely for their support in their last years, prompted her to reside, much of the time, at Quincy. Such was the name now given, in honor of her maternal grandfather, to that part of the ancient town of Braintree, in which she lived. Yet when at the seat of Government, whether in Philadelphia or Washington, the influence of her kindly feelings and cheerful temper did much to soften the asperities of the time. A good idea of the privations and discomforts, to which she was subjected in the President's House at Washington, when that place had scarcely emerged from the primitive forest, may be formed from one or two other letters, which, in this view, are excepted from the general ex-



clusion.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of public or private troubles, the buoyant spirit of Mrs. Adams never forsook her. "I am a mortal enemy," she writes upon one occasion to her husband, "to any thing but a cheerful countenance and a merry heart, which, Solomon tells us, does good like a medicine." This spirit contributed greatly to lift up his heart, when surrounded by difficulties and danger, exposed to open hostility and secret detraction, and resisting a torrent of invective, such as it may well be doubted whether any other individual in public station in the United States has ever tried to stem. It was this spirit, which soothed his wounded feelings, when the country, which he had served in the full consciousness of the perfect honesty of his motives, threw him off, and signified its preference for other statesmen. There often are, even in this life, more compensations for the severest of the troubles that afflict mankind, than we are apt to think. It may be questioned whether Mr. Adams's more successful rival, who, in the day of his power, wielded popular masses with far greater skill and success than he, ever realized, in the hours of his subsequent retirement, any consolation for his pecuniary embarrassments, like that which Mr. Adams enjoyed from the faithful devotedness of his wife, and, it may be added, the successful labors of his son.

There were many persons, in the lifetime of the parties, who ascribed to Mrs. Adams a degree of influence over the public conduct of her husband, far greater than there was any foundation for in truth. Perhaps it is giving more than its due importance to this idea to take any notice at all of it in this place. But the design of this Memoir is to set forth, in as clear a light as possible, the character of its subject; and this cannot well be done without a full explanation of her personal relations to those about her. That her opinions, even upon public affairs, had at all times great weight with her husband, is unquestionably true, for he frequently marked upon her letters his testimony to their solidity; but

<sup>1</sup> 21 and 27 November, 1800. Page 381, *et seq.*



there is no evidence, that they either originated or materially altered any part of the course he had laid out for himself. Whenever she differed in sentiment from him, which was sometimes the case, she perfectly well understood her own position, and that the best way of recommending her views was by entire concession. The character of Mr. Adams is clearly visible in his own papers. Ardent, vehement in support of what he believed to be right, easily roused to anger by opposition, but sincere, placable, and generous, when made conscious of having committed the slightest wrong, there is no individual of this time, about whom there are so few concealments, of either faults or virtues. Instances of his imprudence are visible, and of the mode in which his wife treated them, in at least two letters of this collection.<sup>1</sup> She was certain that a word said, not at the moment of irritation, but immediately after it had passed, would receive great consideration from him. She therefore waited the favorable time, and thus, by the calmness of her judgment, exercised a species of negative influence, which often prevented evil consequences from momentary indiscretion. But her power extended no farther, nor did she seek to make it do so, and in this consisted her principal merit. Perhaps it may be added, that, to men of ardent and excitable temperament, no virtue is more necessary in a wife, and none more essential to the happiness and prosperity of both the parties, than that which has been now described.

Four letters addressed to Mr. Jefferson in the year 1804 have been admitted into the present collection for reasons which require a particular explanation. The answers written by that gentleman were published some time since in the collection of his works made under the authority and supervision of his grandson, Mr. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, though unaccompanied by any comment which could show what it was they replied to or how Mrs. Adams got into the rather singular position which she occupies of a

<sup>1</sup> Letters of 18 January, 1785, and 21 November, 1786. Page 226 and 309.

disputant with him upon the leading political questions of the time. In order to understand this, it is necessary to go back and trace the early relations between them and the reasons why those relations were afterwards changed. Mr. Jefferson went to Europe nearly at the same time with Mrs. Adams. Their residence there was of similar duration, though not always in the same place. Throughout the period of that residence an active interchange of good offices was carried on between them. The official connexion that existed between Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams, while the latter remained in France, was improved into a pleasant social intimacy. Out of the small circle of Americans whom Mrs. Adams met with in that country, Mr. Jefferson could hardly fail to prove, as indeed he did, by far the most agreeable individual to her. It will hence be seen, that upon her departure from Paris, the principal regret which she expresses to her friend in America is at the necessity of leaving that gentleman—for “he,” she adds, “is one of the choice ones of the earth.”<sup>1</sup> Again, she manifests the confidence which she entertains, both in his patriotism and his personal friendship, in a letter written to another friend<sup>2</sup> after her arrival in London. Her kindly feelings were still further developed by the arrival of his little daughter from Virginia, and by the care she was requested by him to take of her during the brief interval that elapsed before he could send for her to join him. Indeed, so far did they go, that when the moment of departure took place, the affectionate regret which the child manifested at the separation, appears to have left an indelible impression upon her mind.<sup>3</sup>

From the incidental notices thus gathered out of Mrs. Adams’s private correspondence with her friends at home, it cannot be doubted, that up to the period of return to America of the parties now in question, the most amicable

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Shaw, 8 May, 1785, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mrs. Cranch, 1 October, 1785, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Mrs. Cranch, 16 July, 1787, and that to Mr. Jefferson, 20 May, 1804. Page 326 and p. 389.

relations had existed without interruption between them. Even after that time, and when, under the administration of President Washington, it became certain that a difference in political sentiments must inevitably have the effect to throw two persons, so distinguished as were Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams, into collision, the social intimacy between them, though relaxed, was not materially disturbed. The address of the former gentleman to the Senate, upon taking his place as Vice-President, shows the desire he then entertained to continue it. But events were destined to be stronger than men. The vehement contest for the Presidency in 1801 scattered to the winds all traces of former friendship. It was at that time that each party in turn strove to discover in certain overt acts of the other, a justification for estrangement, which would with equal certainty have occurred, whether those acts had or had not been intended to give it a form of expression. It is not in the nature of men to be able entirely to resist the force of those passions which rivalry in a common object of ardent desire will stir up in their bosoms. The earnestness with which Mr. Jefferson endeavours to deny their operation upon him, whilst every page of his letters shows as clearly as light how much sway they had over him, constitutes the most serious impeachment that can be brought against his sincerity. There is an appearance of duplicity in this part of his conduct which it is difficult altogether to explain away. The writer is not however disposed himself to attach great weight to the charge. For the fact can scarcely be doubted, that both Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson tried, as hard as men could do, to resist the natural effect upon them of their antagonist positions. They strove, each in turn, to stem the proscriptive fury of the parties to which they belonged, and that with equally bad success. But as the mode in which they attempted it is singularly illustrative of the opposite character of the two men, perhaps it may not be without its use to the present generation, to venture upon a description of it.

It is a well attested fact, that Mr. Adams hardly attained



to the Presidency, before he strove to arrange a mode, by which to bring into office some leading individuals of the party politically opposed to him, whom he personally esteemed. His offers to Mr. Jefferson, to Mr. Madison and to Mr. Gerry, the last of whom only accepted them, are perfectly well known.<sup>1</sup> These offers were not however made without prodigious resistance on the part of numbers of his own political friends, and probably contributed to weaken the attachment of many, and to promote the disaffection of more of them. The consequence was his fall from power as the penalty of a disregard to prudent counsels. On the other hand, Mr. Jefferson, when elected to the same office, though professing much good will towards, and personal esteem of his opponent, Mr. Adams, yet candidly admits,<sup>2</sup> that he suffered the impulse of his heart to be restrained by the decided negative to action interposed on the part of his partisan advisers. It is not probable, that, even had he carried into effect his proposed design to offer to Mr. Adams an office of trust and profit in Massachusetts, this gentleman would have accepted it; but the offer alone would have been invaluable to him at the moment of defeat, as a testimonial both to his public and private integrity, openly given by his successful rival. And it would forever after have estopped the friends of the victorious candidate from taking an ungenerous advantage of their victory over him.

But the prudence of Mr. Jefferson then gained the mastery over his generosity. It went even further — for not content with doing nothing at all for his rival, he actually inflicted upon him a blow. He removed, without cause assigned, his son, John Quincy Adams, from a very subordinate office, the instant that it happened to come within the reach of his reforming power. This was perhaps the act that carried with it the most of bitterness to Mr. and

<sup>1</sup> See the "Memoir, Correspondence and Miscellanies from the papers of Thomas Jefferson, edited by Thomas Jefferson Randolph," vol. iv. p. 501, for the facts, without regard to the inferences arbitrarily drawn by Mr. Jefferson himself.

<sup>2</sup> See the "Memoir, Correspondence and Miscellanies, from the papers of Thomas Jefferson — edited by Thomas Jefferson Randolph." Vol. iv. p. 158.

Mrs. Adams. It is no more than due to the author of it to add his explanation. He solemnly affirms that he made the removal without knowing whom he was removing. And weakening the force of that argument by betraying his sense of the necessity of another, he maintains, in further extenuation, that the law which changed the form of the office had at the same time vacated it. Hence that, when he exercised his freshly-acquired power of appointment in favor of another person, he did not remove Mr. Adams. Perhaps the great majority of readers will agree with the writer in thinking less unfavorably of the deed itself, than of the apology it was thought advisable to make for it.

For after all, it can never be any great impeachment of Mr. Jefferson to say that he attempted no serious opposition to the party torrent that bore him into power; a torrent which must always have its course in the United States, let who will endeavour to resist it. He knew the effort would be futile, and could be executed only to his own destruction. The true ground of exception against him is, that seeing and feeling the necessity of submission, he did not yield to it at once with frankness. Considering the very high regard which he continued to profess towards his rival, and which there is no doubt he felt when his interests were not so deeply involved as to tempt him to suppress it, it would seem as if he was under some responsibility for the odium which it was in his day, and still is the pleasure of his political disciples, very unjustly to cast upon Mr. Adams. There were, doubtless, great and radical differences of opinion upon abstract questions in the theory of government, between the two gentlemen. And the soundness of their respective notions, as Mr. Jefferson truly remarks, yet remains to be tested by the passage of time and the world's experience. In the mean while, however, there is no more reason for condemning the one party on account of his opinions than the other. Yet, notwithstanding the frequent admission of this truth in his private letters, it can scarcely be denied, that Mr. Jefferson drew, during his public life,



every possible advantage from the prevalence of a wholly opposite conviction in the popular mind. A very large number of the citizens of the Union were impressed not simply with a dislike of the sentiments of Mr. Adams, but with a conviction that our republican institutions were in danger from their predominance in his person. This conviction, which was never entertained by Mr. Jefferson, a few words inserted in any document, designed to be *public*, and from his own hand when President, would have gone very far to dispel. He never chose to give this form of utterance to them. It consequently happened, that whilst he could affirm that *in private*, "none ever misrepresented Mr. Adams in his presence without his asserting his just character," his official conduct and the tone of all his political friends, was constantly giving a sanction to the grossest and most unequivocal misrepresentations of him. And whilst he was professing in secret a wish to give him an honorable office, his party was studiously making his very name a word of fear to all the less intelligent classes of the community. This inconsistency may have been, it is true, a consequence not so much of the will of Mr. Jefferson as of the necessity in which he was placed. Much allowance must often be made for the difficult positions of our public statesmen. He is also entitled to much credit for his voluntary efforts, in after life, to repair the injury he must have been aware he had committed. This conduct, on his part, was not without a degree of magnanimity, which may have its use, as an example to future political rivals in America. There will doubtless be many instances in our history, in which the victor in party strife will have gained much by fomenting popular prejudices against his opponent; but it is not equally certain, that there will be as many, in which he will afterwards endeavour to repair the injury done, by leaving behind him upon record the amplest testimonials to that opponent's public virtue. Yet, after making all the concessions which his warmest friends can with any show of justice demand in his favour, the inconsistency here pointed out must remain as a blemish upon his character.



It is by no means the disposition of the present writer to judge with an undue degree of harshness. But no duty appears to him more absolutely incumbent upon all who address the American public than that of exercising the faculty of clear, moral discrimination, and he should have felt himself deserving of censure if he had omitted to attempt it to this extent upon the present occasion.

Mrs. Adams felt, as women only feel, what she regarded as the ungenerous conduct of Mr. Jefferson towards her husband during the latter part of his public life. And when she retired from Washington, notwithstanding the kindest professions from his mouth were yet ringing in her ears, all communication between the parties ceased. Still, on both sides there remained pleasant reminiscences to soften the irritation that had taken place, and to open a way for reconciliation whenever circumstances should present a suitable opportunity. The little daughter of Mr. Jefferson, in whom Mrs. Adams had taken so much interest in 1787, had in the interval grown into a woman, and had been married to Mr. Eppes, of Virginia. Her death took place in 1804. The news of that event revived all the kind feelings that had long been smothered in the breast of Mrs. Adams, and impelled her, almost against her judgment, to pen the short letter of condolence to the lady's father which makes the first of the series now submitted to the public. Mr. Jefferson appears to have been much affected by this testimony of her sympathy. He replied, but not confining himself to the subject matter of her letter, he added a request to know her reasons for the estrangement that had occurred. These reasons were given in the letters that follow, now and then betraying a little of the asperity to which the contest had given birth on each side. The correspondence ended without entire satisfaction to either. It appears, from Mr. Jefferson's statement, afterwards made in a letter to Dr. Rush, that he did not choose at first to believe Mrs. Adams's assertion that she had written to him without the knowledge of her husband. It further appears, that without any new evidence upon which to found a change of opinion, he after-

wards convinced himself that what she had written was true. Fortunately, the original endorsement, made in the handwriting of Mr. Adams, upon the copy of the last of the letters retained by herself, will serve to put this matter beyond question. Readers will be apt to judge of the reasoning contained in the correspondence, according to their predilections in politics. But whichever way they may incline, one thing they will all be glad to know, and of that they may be assured, that the argument of Mrs. Adams was entirely her own. If it were not for this certainty, a great deduction would be necessary from the interest that must now be felt in her part of the correspondence. As the letters of a man, trained in the discipline and the logic of the schools, they would make but a poor figure against the plausible and adroit special pleading of the opposing party; but when viewed as the simple offspring of good sense and right feeling, combining in a woman to form just as well as straight-forward conclusions upon the most difficult public questions, they are not without their value, even though set in contrast with the polished productions of a writer so celebrated as Mr. Jefferson.

It has been already remarked, that the correspondence ended without appearing to produce any favourable effect in restoring the parties to their pristine cordiality. The principal reason for this probably was, that Mr. Jefferson was still President of the United States; and that a change then brought about in consequence of a step first taken by Mrs. Adams, might have subjected her conduct to the possibility of misconstruction. This her spirit would never have willingly submitted to. Perhaps the same consideration had its effect upon the general tone of her letters, which is not so conciliatory, as from other parts of her character, one might be led to expect. It was felt to be not so by Mr. Jefferson, who considered it as having interposed a new barrier to reconciliation, rather than as having removed the old ones. But such did not prove its ultimate effect. The parties relapsed into silence for a time, it is true, but there is evidence that they began again to think kindly of each

other. And when they had come once more upon equal terms, by the retirement of Mr. Jefferson from public life, Dr. Rush, a common friend, found no great difficulty in removing all obstacles to a renewed communication. A correspondence was again established which gradually improved into something of the ancient kindliness. But Mrs. Adams appears to have taken no part in it; and it may be doubted whether it was before the beautiful letter<sup>1</sup> of condolence, written to him by Mr. Jefferson upon the news of her decease, that the heart of Mr. Adams softened into perfect cordiality towards his ancient and his successful opponent.

From the year 1801 down to the day of her death, which happened on the 28th of October, 1818, she remained uninterruptedly at home in Quincy. This period furnishes abundance of familiar letters. Her interest in public affairs did not cease with the retirement of her husband. She continued to write to her friends her free opinions, both of men and measures, perhaps with a more sustained hand on account of the share her son was then taking in politics. But these letters bring us down to times so recent, and they contain so many allusions to existing persons and matters of a domestic and wholly private nature, that they are not deemed suitable for publication, at least at present. On some accounts, this is perhaps to be regretted. None of her letters present a more agreeable picture of life, or a more characteristic idea of their author, than these. The old age of Mrs. Adams was not one of grief and repining, of clouds and darkness. Her cheerfulness continued, with the full possession of her faculties, to the last; and her sunny spirit enlivened the small social circle around her, brightened the solitary hours of her husband, and spread the influence of its example over the town where she lived. "Yesterday," she writes to a grand-daughter on the 26th of

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps there is not, among all the productions of Mr. Jefferson, a more graceful and delicate specimen of his style than this short letter. As connected with the present subject, it may not be unacceptable to the reader to find it appended to the close of this Memoir.



October, 1814, "yesterday completes half a century since I entered the married state, then just your age. I have great cause of thankfulness, that I have lived so long, and enjoyed so large a portion of happiness as has been my lot. The greatest source of unhappiness I have known in that period has arisen from the long and cruel separations, which I was called, in a time of war and with a young family around me, to submit to." Yet she had not been without her domestic afflictions. A daughter lost in infancy; a son grown up to manhood, who died in 1800; and thirteen years afterwards, the death of her only remaining daughter, the wife of Colonel W. S. Smith, furnished causes of deep and severe grief, which threw a shadow of sadness over the evening of her life. But they produced no permanent gloom, nor did they prevent her from enjoying the consolations to be found in gratitude to the Divine Being for the blessings that still remained to her. She was rewarded for the painful separation from her eldest son, when he went abroad in the public service under circumstances which threatened a long absence, by surviving the eight years that it lasted, and by witnessing his return to receive from the Chief Magistrate elect, Mr. Monroe, the highest testimony he could give him of his confidence. This was the fulfilment of the wish nearest to her heart. The letters addressed to him when a youth, which have been admitted into this volume, will abundantly show the deep interest she had felt in his success. His nomination as Secretary of State was the crowning mercy of her life. Had she survived the attack of the fever which proved fatal, it is true that she might have seen him exalted still higher, to that station which her husband and his father had held before him; but it is very doubtful whether her satisfaction would have been at all enhanced. The commencement of Mr. Monroe's administration was marked by a unanimity of the popular voice, the more gratifying to her because it was something so new. Later times have only carried us back to party divisions, of the bitterness of which she had during her lifetime tasted too largely to relish even the little of sweet which they might have to give.

The obsequies of Mrs. Adams were attended by a great concourse of people, who voluntarily came to pay this last tribute to her memory. The Reverend Mr. Whitney, the worthy pastor of the parish where she had in her lifetime regularly worshipped, made her character the subject of appropriate eulogy. Several brief but beautiful notices of her appeared in the newspapers of the day, and a sermon was preached by the late Reverend Dr. Kirkland, then President of Harvard University, which closed with a delicate and affecting testimony to her worth. "Ye will seek to mourn, bereaved friends," it says, "as becomes Christians, in a manner worthy of the person you lament. You do, then, bless the Giver of life, that the course of your endeared and honored friend was so long and so bright; that she entered so fully into the spirit of those injunctions which we have explained, and was a minister of blessings to all within her influence. You are soothed to reflect, that she was sensible of the many tokens of divine goodness which marked her lot; that she received the good of her existence with a cheerful and grateful heart; that, when called to weep, she bore adversity with an equal mind; that she used the world as not abusing it to excess, improving well her time, talents, and opportunities, and, though desired longer in this world, was fitted for a better happiness than this world can give."

It often happens, when the life of a woman is the topic of discussion, that men think it necessary either to fall into a tone of affected gallantry and unmeaning compliment, or to assume the extreme of unnatural and extravagant eulogy. Yet there seems no reason, in the nature of things, why the same laws of composition should not be made to apply to the one sex as to the other. It has been the wish of the Editor to avoid whatever might be considered as mere empty praise of his subject, in which, if he has not altogether succeeded, some allowance may, it is hoped, be made for the natural bias under which he writes. It has been his purpose to keep far within the line marked out by the great master of composition, who, in allusion to the first instance in Rome when a woman, Popilia, was publicly praised by her son



Catulus, defines the topics which may be treated with propriety upon any similar occasion.<sup>1</sup> He does not claim for the letters now published to the world, that they are models of style, though in behalf of some of them such a claim might, perhaps, be reasonably urged; nor yet that they contain much novel or important historical information. What merit they may have will be found in the pictures of social life which they present, during a period daily becoming more interesting as it recedes from us, and in the high moral and religious tone which uniformly pervades them. They are here given to the public exactly as they were written, with only those corrections or omissions which were absolutely necessary either to perfect the sense, or to avoid subjects exclusively personal. It was the habit of the writer to make first a rough draft of what she intended to say, and from this to form a fair copy for her correspondent; but in the process she altered so much of the original, that, in every instance where the two have been compared, they are by no means the same thing. Only in one or two cases, and for particular reasons, has the loss of the real letter been supplied by the first draft. The principal difference between them ordinarily is, that the former is much the most full. Frequently, it will be seen that she did not copy, the task being extremely irksome to her.

The value attached by some of her correspondents to her letters, was, even in her lifetime, so considerable, that it produced from one of them, the late Judge Vanderkemp of

<sup>1</sup> "Ex his enim fontibus, unde omnia ornate dicendi præcepta sumuntur, licebit etiam laudationem ornare, neque illa elementa desiderare; quæ ut nemo tradat, quis est, qui nesciat, quæ sint in homine laudanda? Positis enim iis rebus, quas Crassus in illius orationis suæ, quam contra collegam censor habuit, principio dixit; 'Quæ naturâ aut fortunâ darentur hominibus, in iis rebus, se vinci posse animo æquo pati: quæ ipsi sibi homines parare possent, in iis rebus se pati vinci non posse;' qui laudabit quempiam, intelliget, exponenda sibi esse fortunæ bona. Ea sunt, generis, pecuniæ, propinquorum, amicorum, opum, valetudinis, formæ, virium, ingenii, cæterarumque rerum, quæ sunt aut corporis, aut extraneæ: si habuerit, bene his usum: si non habuerit, sapienter caruisse: si amiserit, moderate tulisse. Deinde, quid sapienter is, quem laudet, quid liberaliter, quid fortiter, quid juste, quid magnifice, quid pie, quid grate, quid humaniter, quid denique cum aliquâ virtute, aut fecerit aut tulerit." — *Cicero, de Oratore*, II. 11.



New York, a request that a collection should then be made for publication. In allusion to this, Mrs. Adams writes in a note to a female friend ;

“ The President has a letter from Vanderkemp, in which he proposes to have him send a collection of my letters to publish ! A pretty figure I should make. No. No. I have not any ambition to appear in print. Heedless and inaccurate as I am, I have too much vanity to risk my reputation before the public.”

And, on the same day, she replied to Judge Vanderkemp as follows ;

“ Quincy, 24 January, 1818.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ When President Monroe was in Boston, upon his late tour, encompassed by citizens, surrounded by the military, harassed by invitations to parties, and applications innumerable for office, some gentleman asked him if he was not completely worn out ? To which he replied, ‘ O no. A little flattery will support a man through great fatigue.’ I may apply the observation to myself and say, that the flattery in your letter leads me to break through the aversion, which is daily increasing upon me, to writing.

“ You terrify me, my dear Sir, when you ask for letters of mine to publish. It is true, that Dr. Disney, to whom the late Mr. Hollis bequeathed his property, found amongst his papers some letters from the President and from me, which he asked permission to publish. We had both forgotten the contents of them, but left them to his judgment to do with them as he pleased, and accordingly he published some of them. One other letter to my son, when he first went to France in the year 1778, by some means or other, was published in an English Magazine ; and those, I believe, are all the mighty works of mine, which ever have, or will, by my consent, appear before the public. *Style* I never studied. My language is

‘ Warm from the *heart*, and faithful to its fires,’

the spontaneous effusions of friendship. As such I tender them to Mr. Vanderkemp, sure of his indulgence, since I make no pretensions to the character which he professes to fear, that of a learned lady."

These observations are strictly true. To learning, in the ordinary sense of that term, Mrs. Adams could make no claim. Her reading had been extensive in the lighter departments of literature, and she was well acquainted with the poets in her own language; but it went no further. It is the soul, shining through the words, that gives to them their great attraction; the spirit, ever equal to the occasion, whether a great or a small one;—a spirit, inquisitive and earnest in the little details of life, as when she was in France and England; playful, when she describes daily duties;<sup>1</sup> but rising to the call, when the roar of cannon is in her ears,<sup>2</sup> — or when she reproves her husband for not knowing her better than to think her a coward and to fear telling her bad news,<sup>3</sup> — or when she warns her son, that she "would rather he had found his grave in the ocean, or that any untimely death should crop him in his infant years, than see him an immoral, profligate, or graceless child."<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, the Editor desires to express his gratitude to many individuals who have most cheerfully and unreservedly offered to him the use of letters from which this collection has been made. Among those persons, he would particularly define his obligations to Mrs. John Greenleaf, of Quincy, and Mrs. Felt, of Boston, respectively, daughters of the two sisters of Mrs. Adams; also to Mr. Norton, the son of another daughter; Mrs. C. A. De Wint, of Fishkill, New York, the daughter of Mrs. W. S. Smith; the family of Mrs. Warren, of Plymouth; Mrs. Hammatt, the daughter of Mrs. Cushing; and Mrs. and Miss Quincy. These are the sources from which have been drawn all the materials for the volume, not in the possession of his immediate relatives, or in his own.

<sup>1</sup> Letter, 19 November, 1812.

<sup>3</sup> Page 81.

<sup>2</sup> Pages 67-70.

<sup>4</sup> Page 96.

It was the fortune of the Editor to know the subject of his Memoir only during the last year of her life, and when he was too young fully to comprehend the worth of her character; but it will be a source of unceasing gratification to him, that he has been permitted to pay this tribute, however inadequate, to her memory.





## NOTE.

The following letter is the one alluded to in the Note to page Iv of this Memoir.

### THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Monticello, 13 November, 1818.

THE public papers, my dear friend, announce the fatal event of which your letter of October the 20th had given me ominous foreboding. Tried myself in the school of affliction, by the loss of every form of connexion which can rive the human heart, I know well, and feel what you have lost, what you have suffered, are suffering, and have yet to endure. The same trials have taught me, that for ills so immeasurable, time and silence are the only medicine. I will not therefore, by useless condolences, open afresh the sluices of your grief, nor, although mingling sincerely my tears with yours, will I say a word more where words are vain ; but that it is of some comfort to us both, that the term is not very distant, at which we are to deposit in the same cerement our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved and lost, and whom we shall still love and never lose again.

God bless you and support you under your heavy affliction.

TH: JEFFERSON.







I return you thanks Sir for the trouble you  
took in exchanging my Money, our currency is some  
thing like the Stock is a bawd, rises and falls with the  
verbs of the Day. I have the Honor to be Sir with  
sincere esteem your obliged Humble Servant

Wm<sup>th</sup> Oliver Wendell  
A. Adams

Jan<sup>y</sup> 20. 1780

LETTERS.





## LETTERS.

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TO MRS. H. LINCOLN.<sup>1</sup>

Weymouth, 5 October, 1761. ✓

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Does not my friend think me a stupid girl, when she has kindly offered to correspond with me, that I should be so senseless as not to accept the offer? Senseless and stupid I would confess myself, and that to the greatest degree, if I did not foresee the many advantages I shall receive from corresponding with a lady of your known prudence and understanding.

I gratefully accept your offer; although I may be charged with vanity in pretending to entertain you with my scrawls; yet I know your generosity is such, that, like a kind parent, you will bury in oblivion all my imperfections. I do not aim at entertaining. I write merely for the instruction and edification which I shall receive, provided you honor me with your correspondence.

Your letter I received, and believe me, it has not been through forgetfulness, that I have not before this time returned you my sincere thanks for the kind assurance you

<sup>1</sup> For this early letter the Editor is indebted to the kindness of Miss E. S. Quincy, a grand-niece of the lady to whom it was addressed. After the death of her first husband Mrs. Lincoln was married to Ebenezer Storer, Esq., of Boston, and died only a few years ago.

then gave me of continued friendship. You have, I hope, pardoned my suspicions ; they arose from love. What persons in their right senses would calmly, and without repining or even inquiring into the cause, submit to lose their greatest temporal good and happiness ? for thus the divine Dr. Young, looks upon a true friend, when he says,

“ A friend is worth all hazards we can run.  
Poor is the friendless master of a world ;  
A world in purchase for a friend is gain.”

Who, that has once been favored with your friendship, can be satisfied with the least diminution of it ? Not those who value it according to its worth.

You have, like king Ahasuerus, held forth, though not a golden sceptre, yet one more valuable, the sceptre of friendship, if I may so call it. Like Esther, I would draw nigh and touch it. Will you proceed and say, “ What wilt thou ? ” and “ What is thy request ? it shall be even given thee to the half of my heart.” Why, no. I think I will not have so dangerous a present, lest your good man should find it out and challenge me ; but, if you please, I’ll have a place in one corner of it, a place well guarded and fortified, or still I shall fear being jostled out by him. Now do not deny my request on purpose to make me feel the weight of your observation, “ that we are often disappointed when we set our minds upon that which is to yield us great happiness.” I know it too well already. Daily experience teaches me that truth.

And now let me ask you, my friend, whether you do not think, that many of our disappointments and much of our unhappiness arise from our forming false notions of things and persons. We strangely impose upon ourselves ; we create a fairy land of happiness. Fancy is fruitful and promises fair, but, like the dog in the fable, we catch at a shadow, and when we find the disappointment, we are vexed, not with ourselves, who are really the impostors, but with the poor, innocent thing or person of whom we have formed such strange ideas. When this is the case, I believe we



always find, that we have enjoyed more pleasure in the anticipation than in the real enjoyment of our wishes.

Dr. Young says, "Our wishes give us not our wishes." Some disappointments are, indeed, more grievous than others. Since they are our lot, let us bear them with patience. That person that cannot bear a disappointment, must not live in a world so changeable as this, and 't is wise it should be so; for, were we to enjoy a continual prosperity, we should be too firmly attached to the world ever to think of quitting it, and there would be room to fear, that we should be so far intoxicated with prosperity as to swim smoothly from joy to joy, along life's short current, wholly unmindful of the vast ocean, Eternity.

If I did not know that it would be adding to the length of my letter, I might make some excuse for it; but that and another reason will hinder me.

You bid me tell *one* of my sparks (I think that was the word) to bring me to see you. Why! I believe you think they are as plenty as herrings, when, alas! there is as great a scarcity of them as there is of justice, honesty, prudence, and many other virtues. I've no pretensions to one. Wealth, wealth is the only thing that is looked after now. 'T is said Plato thought, if Virtue would appear to the world, all mankind would be enamoured with her, but now interest governs the world and men neglect the golden mean.

But, to be sober, I should really rejoice to come and see you, but if I wait till I get a (what did you call 'em?) I fear you'll be blind with age.

I can say, in the length of this epistle, I've made the golden rule mine. Pray, my friend, do not let it be long before you write to your ever affectionate

A. S.

P. S. My regards to your good man. I've no acquaintance with him, but if you love him, I do, and should be glad to see him.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

Thursday Eve. Weymouth, 19 April, 1764.

WHY, my good man, thou hast the curiosity of a girl. Who could have believed, that only a slight hint would have set thy imagination agog in such a manner. And a fine encouragement I have to unravel the mystery as thou callest it. Nothing less, truly, than to be told something to my disadvantage. What an excellent reward that will be! In what court of justice didst thou learn that equity? I thank thee, friend; such knowledge as that is easy enough to be obtained without paying for it. As to the insinuation, it doth not give me any uneasiness; for, if it is any thing very bad, I know thou dost not believe it. I am not conscious of any harm that I have done or wished to any mortal. I bear no malice to any being. To my enemies, if any I have, I am willing to afford assistance; therefore towards man I maintain a conscience void of offence.

Yet by this I mean not that I am faultless. But tell me what is the reason, that persons would rather acknowledge themselves guilty than be accused by others? Is it because they are more tender of themselves, or because they meet with more favor from others when they ingenuously confess? Let that be as it will, there is something which makes it more agreeable to condemn ourselves than to be condemned by others.

But, although it is vastly disagreeable to be accused of faults, yet no person ought to be offended when such accusations are delivered in the spirit of friendship. I now call upon you to fulfil your promise, and tell me all my faults both of omission and commission, and all the evil you either know or think of me. Be to me a second conscience, nor put me off to a more convenient season. There can be no time more proper than the present. It will be harder to erase them when habit has strengthened and confirmed them. Do not think I trifle. These are really meant

as words of truth and soberness. For the present, good night.

Friday Morning, April 20th. 1764

What does it signify? Why may not I visit you days as well as nights? I no sooner close my eyes, than some invisible being, swift as the Alborack of Mahomet, bears me to you, — I see you, but cannot make myself visible to you. That tortures me, but it is still worse when I do not come, for I am then haunted by half a dozen ugly sprites. One will catch me and leap into the sea; another will carry me up a precipice like that which Edgar describes in Lear, then toss me down, and, were I not then light as the gossamer, I should shiver into atoms; another will be pouring down my throat stuff worse than the witches' broth in Macbeth. Where I shall be carried next I know not, but I would rather have the smallpox by inoculation half a dozen times than be sprited about as I am. What say you? Can you give me any encouragement to come? By the time you receive this I hope from experience you will be able to say, that the distemper is but a trifle. Think you I would not endure a trifle for the pleasure of seeing you? Yes, were it ten times that trifle, I would. But my own inclinations must not be followed, — to duty I sacrifice them. Yet, O my mamma, forgive me if I say, you have forgot or never knew — but hush, and do you excuse me that something I promised you, since it was a speech more undutiful than that which I just now stopped myself in. For the present, good bye.

Friday evening. ✓

I hope you smoke your letters well, before you deliver them. Mamma is so fearful lest I should catch the distemper, that she hardly ever thinks the letters are sufficiently purified. Did you never rob a bird's nest? Do you remember how the poor bird would fly round and round,



fearful to come nigh, yet not know how to leave the place? Just so they say I hover round Tom, whilst he is smoking my letters.

But heyday, Mr. What's your name, who taught you to threaten so vehemently? "A character besides that of a critic, in which if I never did, I always hereafter shall fear you." Thou canst not prove a villain, impossible,—I, therefore, still insist upon it, that I neither do nor can fear thee. For my part, I know not that there is any pleasure in being feared; but, if there is, I hope you will be so generous as to fear your Diana, that she may at least be made sensible of the pleasure. Mr. Ayers will bring you this letter and the *bag*. Do not repine,—it is filled with balm.

Here is love, respects, regards, good wishes—a whole wagon load of them, sent you from all the good folks in the neighborhood.

✓ To-morrow makes the fourteenth day. How many more are to come? I dare not trust myself with the thought. Adieu. Let me hear from you by Mr. Ayers, and excuse this very bad writing; if you had mended my pen it would have been better. Once more, adieu. Gold and silver have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee,—which is the affectionate regard of your  
A. S.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Weymouth, Sunday Evening, 14 September, 1767. ✓

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

THE Doctor talks of setting out to-morrow for New Brain-tree. I did not know but that he might chance to see you in his way there. I know from the tender affection you bear me and our little ones, that you will rejoice to hear that we are well. Our son is much better than when you left

home, and our daughter rocks him to sleep with the song of "Come, papa, come home to brother Johnny." Sunday seems a more lonely day to me than any other when you are absent; for, though I may be compared to those climates which are deprived of the sun half the year, yet upon a Sunday you commonly afforded us your benign influence. I am now at Weymouth, my father brought me here last night; to-morrow I return home, where I hope soon to receive the dearest of friends, and the tenderest of husbands, with that unabated affection which has for years past, and will whilst the vital spark lasts, burn in the bosom of your affectionate

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. WARREN.<sup>1</sup>

Boston, 5 December, 1773.

MY DEAR MRS. WARREN,

Do not, my worthy friend, tax me with either breach of promise or neglect towards you; the only reason why I did not write to you immediately upon your leaving town was my being seized with a fever, which has confined me almost ever since. I have not for these many years known so severe a fit of sickness. I am now, through the favor of Heaven, so far returned as to be able to leave my chamber some part of the day. I will not make any other apology for my past neglect, being fully sensible that I alone have been the sufferer. My pen, which I once loved and delighted in, has for a long time been out of credit with me. Could I borrow the powers and faculties of my much valued friend, I should then hope to use it with advantage to myself and delight to others. Incorrect and unpolished as it is, I will not suffer a mistaken pride so far to lead me astray as to omit the present opportunity of improve-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mercy Warren, the wife of General James Warren, of Plymouth, and the sister of James Otis.

ment. And should I prove a tractable scholar, you will not find me tardy.

You, madam, are so sincere a lover of your country, and so hearty a mourner in all her misfortunes, that it will greatly aggravate your anxiety to hear how much she is now oppressed and insulted. To you, who have so thoroughly looked through the deeds of men, and developed the dark designs of a rapacious soul, no action however base or sordid, no measure however cruel and villanous, will be matter of any surprise.

The tea, that baneful weed, is arrived. Great and I hope, effectual opposition has been made to the landing of it. To the public papers I must refer you for particulars. You will there find that the proceedings of our citizens have been united, spirited and firm. The flame is kindled, and like lightning it catches from soul to soul. Great will be the devastation, if not timely quenched or allayed by some more lenient measures. Although the mind is shocked at the thought of shedding human blood, more especially the blood of our countrymen, and a civil war is of all wars the most dreadful, such is the present spirit that prevails, that if once they are made desperate, many, very many of our heroes will spend their lives in the cause, with the speech of Cato in their mouths.

Such is the present situation of affairs, that I tremble when I think what may be the direful consequences, and in this town must the scene of action lie. My heart beats at every whistle I hear, and I dare not express half my fears. Eternal reproach and ignominy be the portion of all those who have been instrumental in bringing those fears upon me. There has prevailed a report that to-morrow there will be an attempt to land this weed of slavery. I will then write further. Till then, my worthy friend, adieu.

11 December.

Since I wrote the above, a whole week has elapsed and nothing new occurred concerning the tea. Having met with no opportunity of sending this, I shall trespass further



upon your patience. I send with this the first volume of Moliere, and should be glad of your opinion of the plays. I cannot be brought to like them. There seems to me to be a general want of spirit. At the close of every one, I have felt disappointed. There are no characters but what appear unfinished; and he seems to have ridiculed vice without engaging us to virtue. And though he sometimes makes us laugh, yet 'tis a smile of indignation. There is one negative virtue of which he is possessed, I mean that of decency. His cit turned gentleman, among many others, has met with approbation. Though I can readily acknowledge that the cit, by acting so contrary to his real character, has displayed a stupid vanity justly deserving ridicule, yet the fine gentleman who defrauds and tricks him is as much the baser character as his advantages are superior to the other's. Moliere is said to have been an honest man, but sure he has not copied from his own heart. Though he has drawn many pictures of real life, yet all pictures of life are not fit to be exhibited upon the stage. I fear I shall incur the charge of vanity by thus criticising an author who has met with so much applause. You, madam, I hope will forgive me. I should not have done it, if we had not conversed about it before. Your judgment will have great weight with

Your sincere friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 19 August, 1774. ✓

THE great distance between us makes the time appear very long to me. It seems already a month since you left me. The great anxiety I feel for my country, for you, and for our family, renders the day tedious, and the night unpleasant. The rocks and quicksands appear upon every side. What course you can or will take is all wrapped in the

bosom of futurity. Uncertainty and expectation leave the mind great scope. Did ever any kingdom or state regain its liberty, when once it was invaded, without bloodshed? I cannot think of it without horror. Yet we are told, that all the misfortunes of Sparta were occasioned by their too great solicitude for present tranquillity, and, from an excessive love of peace, they neglected the means of making it sure and lasting. They ought to have reflected, says Polybius, that, "as there is nothing more desirable or advantageous than peace, when founded in justice and honor, so there is nothing more shameful, and at the same time more pernicious, when attained by bad measures, and purchased at the price of liberty." I have received a most charming letter from our friend Mrs. Warren. She desires me to tell you that her best wishes attend you through your journey, both as a friend and a patriot, — hopes you will have no uncommon difficulties to surmount, or hostile movements to impede you, — but, if the Locrians should interrupt you, she hopes that you will beware, that no future annals may say you chose an ambitious Philip for your leader, who subverted the noble order of the American Amphictyons, and built up a monarchy on the ruins of the happy institution.

I have taken a very great fondness for reading Rollin's Ancient History since you left me. I am determined to go through with it, if possible, in these my days of solitude. I find great pleasure and entertainment from it, and I have persuaded Johnny to read me a page or two every day, and hope he will, from his desire to oblige me, entertain a fondness for it. We have had a charming rain, which lasted twelve hours, and has greatly revived the dying fruits of the earth.

I want much to hear from you.<sup>1</sup> I long impatiently to have you upon the stage of action. The first of September, or the month of September, perhaps, may be of as much importance to Great Britain, as the Ides of March

<sup>1</sup> See the answer by Mr. Adams, in the collection of letters heretofore published by the editor. It is dated Princeton, N. J., 28 August.

were to Cæsar. I wish you every public as well as private blessing, and that wisdom which is profitable both for instruction and edification, to conduct you in this difficult day. The little flock remember papa, and kindly wish to see him; so does your most affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 2 September, 1774. ✓

I AM very impatient to receive a letter from you. You indulged me so much in that way in your last absence, that I now think I have a right to hear as often from you, as you have leisure and opportunity to write. I hear that Mr. Adams<sup>1</sup> wrote to his son, and the Speaker<sup>2</sup> to his lady; but perhaps you did not know of the opportunity. I suppose you have before this time received two letters from me, and will write me by the same conveyance. I judge you reached Philadelphia last Saturday night. I cannot but felicitate you upon your absence a little while from this scene of perturbation, anxiety, and distress. I own I feel not a little agitated with the accounts I have this day received from town; great commotions have arisen in consequence of a discovery of a traitorous plot of Colonel Brattle's, — his advice to Gage, to break every commissioned officer, and to seize the province's and town's stock of gunpowder. This has so enraged and exasperated the people, that there is great apprehension of an immediate rupture. They have been all in flames ever since the new-fangled counsellors have taken their oaths. The importance, of which they consider the meeting of the Congress, and the result thereof to the community, withholds the arm of vengeance already lifted, ✓

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Samuel Adams.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cushing had been the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Massachusetts until chosen a delegate to the Congress.



which would most certainly fall with accumulated wrath upon Brattle, were it possible to come at him;—but no sooner did he discover that his treachery had taken air, than he fled, not only to Boston, but into the camp, for safety. You will, by Mr. Tudor, no doubt have a much more accurate account than I am able to give you; but one thing I can inform you of, which perhaps you may not have heard, namely, Mr. Vinton, our sheriff, it seems, received one of those twenty warrants,<sup>1</sup> which were issued by Messrs. Goldthwait and Price, which has cost them such bitter repentance and humble acknowledgments, and which has revealed the great secret of their attachment to the liberties of their country, and their veneration and regard for the good will of their countrymen. See their address to Hutchinson and Gage. This warrant, which was for Stoughtonham,<sup>2</sup> Vinton carried and delivered to a constable there; but, before he had got six miles, he was overtaken by sixty men on horseback, who surrounded him, and told him, unless he returned with them and demanded back that warrant and committed it to the flames before their faces, he must take the consequences of a refusal; and he, not thinking it best to endure their vengeance, returned with them, made his demand of the warrant, and consumed it, upon which they dispersed and left him to his own reflections. Since the news of the Quebec bill arrived, all the church people here have hung their heads, and will not converse upon politics, though ever so much provoked by the opposite party. Before that, parties ran very high, and very hard words and threats of blows upon both sides were given out. They have had their town-meeting here, which was full as usual, chose their committee for the county meeting, and did business without once regarding or fearing for the consequences.

<sup>1</sup> These were warrants issued by the clerks of the court by which the juries were summoned.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sharon. The history of the events alluded to in this letter, may be found more at large in Gordon's "History of the American War," Vol. I. pp. 386, 387.

I should be glad to know how you found the people as you travelled from town to town. I hear you met with great hospitality and kindness in Connecticut. Pray let me know how your health is, and whether you have not had exceeding hot weather. The drought has been very severe. My poor cows will certainly prefer a petition to you, setting forth their grievances, and informing you that they have been deprived of their ancient privileges, whereby they are become great sufferers, and desiring that they may be restored to them. More especially, as their living, by reason of the drought, is all taken from them, and their property which they hold elsewhere is decaying, they humbly pray that you would consider them, lest hunger should break through stone walls.

The tenderest regard evermore awaits you from your most affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 14 September, 1774. ✓

DEAREST FRIEND,

FIVE weeks have passed and not one line have I received. I would rather give a dollar for a letter by the post, though the consequence should be, that I ate but one meal a day these three weeks to come. Every one I see is inquiring after you. — When did I hear? — All my intelligence is collected from the newspaper, and I can only reply that I saw by that, you arrived such a day. I know your fondness for writing, and your inclination to let me hear from you by the first safe conveyance, which makes me suspect that some letter or other has miscarried, — but I hope, now you have arrived at Philadelphia, you will find means to convey me some intelligence. We are all well here. I think I enjoy better health than I have done these two years. I

have not been to town since I parted with you there. The Governor is making all kinds of warlike preparations, such as mounting cannon upon Beacon Hill, digging intrenchments upon the Neck, placing cannon there, encamping a regiment there, throwing up breast works, &c. The people are much alarmed, and the selectmen have waited upon him in consequence of it. The County Congress have also sent a committee; all which proceedings you will have a more particular account of, than I am able to give you, from the public papers. But, as to the movements of this town, perhaps you may not hear them from any other person.

In consequence of the powder being taken from Charlestown, a general alarm spread through many towns and was caught pretty soon here. The report took here on Friday, and on Sunday a soldier was seen lurking about the Common, supposed to be a spy, but most likely a deserter. However, intelligence of it was communicated to the other parishes, and about eight o'clock, Sunday evening, there passed by here about two hundred men, preceded by a horsecart, and marched down to the powder-house, from whence they took the powder, and carried it into the other parish and there secreted it. I opened the window upon their return. They passed without any noise, not a word among them till they came against this house, when some of them perceiving me, asked me if I wanted any powder. I replied, No, since it was in so good hands. — The reason they gave for taking it was, that we had so many Tories here, they dared not trust us with it; they had taken Vinton<sup>1</sup> in their train, and upon their return they stopped between Cleverly's and Etter's and called upon him to deliver two warrants.<sup>2</sup> Upon his producing them, they put it to vote whether they should burn them, and it passed in the affirmative. They then made a circle and burnt them. They then called a vote whether they should huzza, but, it being Sunday evening, it passed in the negative. They called upon Vinton to swear, that he would never be instrumental

<sup>1</sup> The Sheriff.

<sup>2</sup> For summoning juries.



in carrying into execution any of these new acts. They were not satisfied with his answers; however, they let him rest. A few days afterwards, upon his making some foolish speeches, they assembled to the amount of two or three hundred, and swore vengeance upon him unless he took a solemn oath. Accordingly, they chose a committee and sent it with him to Major Miller's to see that he complied; and they waited his return, which proving satisfactory, they dispersed. This town appears as high as you can well imagine, and, if necessary, would soon be in arms. Not a Tory but hides his head. The Church parson thought they were coming after him, and ran up garret; they say another jumped out of his window and hid among the corn, whilst a third crept under his board fence and told his beads.

16 September, 1774.

I dined to-day at Colonel Quincy's. They were so kind as to send me and Abby and Betsey an invitation to spend the day with them; and, as I had not been to see them since I removed to Braintree, I accepted the invitation. After I got there came Mr. Samuel Quincy's wife and Mr. Sumner, Mr. Josiah and wife.<sup>1</sup> A little clashing of parties, you may be sure. Mr. Sam's wife said, she thought it high time for her husband to turn about; he had not done half so cleverly since he left her advice; said they both greatly admired the most excellent speech of the Bishop of St. Asaph, which I suppose you have seen. It meets, and most certainly merits the greatest encomiums.<sup>2</sup>

Upon my return at night, Mr. Thaxter met me at the door with your letter,<sup>3</sup> dated at Princeton, New Jersey. It

<sup>1</sup> It is well known, that these two brothers took opposite sides in the struggle that ensued.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Shipley. See Correspondence of Chatham, vol. 4, p. 302, for the same opinion. Also the writings of Dr. Franklin, vol. 8, p. 124, Sparks's edition.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter of Mr. Adams, 28 August, 1774, in the collection before referred to.

really gave me such a flow of spirits, that I was not composed enough to sleep until one o'clock. You make no mention of one I wrote you previous to that you received by Mr. Breck, and sent by Mr. Cunningham. I am rejoiced to hear you are well. I want to know many more particulars than you write me, and hope soon to hear from you again. I dare not trust myself with the thought how long you may perhaps be absent. I only count the weeks already past and they amount to five. I am not so lonely as I should have been without my two neighbors; we make a table-full at meal times. All the rest of their time they spend in the office. Never were two persons who gave a family less trouble than they do. It is at last determined, that Mr. Rice keep the school here. Indeed, he has kept ever since he has been here, but not with any expectation that he should be continued; — but the people, finding no small difference between him and his predecessor, chose he should be continued. I have not sent Johnny.<sup>1</sup> He goes very steadily to Mr. Thaxter, who I believe takes very good care of him; and, as they seem to have a liking to each other, I believe it will be best to continue him with him. However, when you return, we can consult what will be best. I am certain that, if he does not get so much good, he gets less harm; and I have always thought it of very great importance, that children should, in the early part of life, be unaccustomed to such examples as would tend to corrupt the purity of their words and actions, that they may chill with horror at the sound of an oath, and blush with indignation at an obscene expression. These first principles, which grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength, neither time nor custom can totally eradicate. You will perhaps be tired. No. — Let it serve by way of relaxation from the more important concerns of the day, and be such an amusement, as your little hermitage used to afford you here. You have before you, to express myself in the words of the Bishop, the greatest national

<sup>1</sup> Her son, John Quincy Adams.

concerns that ever came before any people ; and, if the prayers and petitions ascend unto Heaven, which are daily offered for you, wisdom will flow down as a stream, and righteousness as the mighty waters, and your deliberations will make glad the cities of our God.

I was very sorry I did not know of Mr. Cary's going ; it would have been so good an opportunity to have sent this, as I lament the loss of. You have heard, no doubt, of the people's preventing the court from sitting in various counties ; and last week, in Taunton, Angier urged the court's opening, and calling out the actions, but could not effect it. I saw a letter from Miss Eunice, wherein she gives an account of it, and says there were two thousand men assembled round the court-house, and, by a committee of nine, presented a petition requesting that they would not sit, and with the utmost order waited two hours for their answer, when they dispersed.

You will burn all these letters, lest they should fall from your pocket, and thus expose your most affectionate friend,  
ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Boston Garrison, 22 September, 1774.

I HAVE just returned from a visit to my brother with my father, who carried me there the day before yesterday, and called here on my return, to see this much injured town. I view it with much the same sensations that I should the body of a departed friend ; — as having only put off its present glory, to rise finally to a more happy state. I will not despair, but will believe, that, our cause being good, we shall finally prevail. The maxim, "In time of peace prepare for war," (if this may be called a time of peace), resounds throughout the country. Next Tuesday they are warned to Braintree, all above fifteen and under sixty, to attend with their arms ; and to train once a fortnight from that time is a scheme which lies much at heart with many.



Scott has arrived, and brings news that he expected to find all peace and quietness here, as he left them at home. You will have more particulars than I am able to send you, from much better hands. There has been in town a conspiracy of the negroes. At present it is kept pretty private, and was discovered by one who endeavoured to dissuade them from it. He being threatened with his life, applied to Justice Quincy for protection. They conducted in this way, got an Irishman to draw up a petition to the Governor, telling him they would fight for him provided he would arm them, and engage to liberate them if he conquered. And it is said that he attended so much to it, as to consult Percy upon it, and one Lieutenant Small has been very busy and active. There is but little said, and what steps they will take in consequence of it I know not. I wish most sincerely there was not a slave in the province; it always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have. You know my mind upon this subject.

I left all our little ones well, and shall return to them to-night. I hope to hear from you by the return of the bearer of this, and by Revere. I long for the day of your return, yet look upon you as much safer where you are, but know it will not do for you;—not one action has been brought to this court,—no business of any sort in your way,—all law ceases, and the gospel will soon follow; for they are supporters of each other. Adieu, my father hurries me.

Yours most sincerely,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ Braintree, 16 October, 1774.

MY MUCH LOVED FRIEND,

✓ I DARE not express to you, at three hundred miles' distance, how ardently I long for your return. I have some very

miserly wishes, and cannot consent to your spending one hour in town, till, at least, I have had you twelve. The idea plays about my heart, unnerves my hand, whilst I write, — awakens all the tender sentiments, that years have increased and matured, and which, when with me, were every day dispensing to you. The whole collected stock of ten weeks' absence knows not how to brook any longer restraint, but will break forth and flow through my pen. May the like sensations enter thy breast, and (spite of all the weighty cares of state) mingle themselves with those I wish to communicate ; for, in giving them utterance, I have felt more sincere pleasure, than I have known since the 10th of August.<sup>1</sup> Many have been the anxious hours I have spent since that day ; the threatening aspect of our public affairs, the complicated distress of this province, the arduous and perplexed business in which you are engaged, have all conspired to agitate my bosom with fears and apprehensions to which I have heretofore been a stranger ; and, far from thinking the scene closed, it looks as though the curtain was but just drawn, and only the first scene of the infernal plot disclosed ; and whether the end will be tragical, Heaven alone knows. You cannot be, I know, nor do I wish to see you, an inactive spectator ; but, if the sword be drawn, I bid adieu to all domestic felicity, and look forward to that country, where there are neither wars nor rumors of war, in a firm belief, that through the mercy of its King, we shall both rejoice there together.

I greatly fear, that the arm of treachery and violence is lifted over us, as a scourge and heavy punishment from Heaven for our numerous offences, and for the misimprovement of our great advantages. If we expect to inherit the blessings of our fathers, we should return a little more to their primitive simplicity of manners, and not sink into inglorious ease. We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them. I have spent one Sabbath in town since you left. I saw no differ-

<sup>1</sup> The day on which he left her.

ence in respect to ornament, &c. ; but in the country you must look for that virtue, of which you find but small glimmerings in the metropolis. Indeed, they have not the advantages, nor the resolution, to encourage our own manufactories, which people in the country have. To the mercantile part, it is considered as throwing away their own bread ; but they must retrench their expenses, and be content with a small share of gain, for they will find but few who will wear their livery. As for me I will seek wool and flax, and work willingly with my hands ; and, indeed, there is occasion for all our industry and economy. You mention the removal of our books, &c., from Boston ;<sup>1</sup> I believe they are safe there, and it would incommode the gentlemen to remove them, as they would not then have a place to repair to for study. I suppose they would not choose to be at the expense of boarding out. Mr. Williams, I believe, keeps pretty much with his mother. Mr. Hill's father had some thoughts of removing up to Braintree, provided he could be accommodated with a house, which he finds very difficult.

Mr. Cranch's last determination was to tarry in town, unless any thing new takes place. His friends in town oppose his removal so much, that he is determined to stay. The opinion you have entertained of General Gage is, I believe, just. Indeed, he professes to act only upon the defensive. The people in the country begin to be very anxious for the Congress to rise ; they have no idea of the weighty business you have to transact, and their blood boils with indignation at the hostile preparations they are constant witnesses of. Mr. Quincy's so secret departure is matter of various speculation ; some say he is deputed by the Congress, others, that he is gone to Holland, and the Tories say he is gone to be hanged.<sup>2</sup>

I rejoice at the favorable account you give me of your health. May it be continued to you. My health is much

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr. Adams, 29 September, 1774.

<sup>2</sup> See the "Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Jr.," by his son, Josiah Quincy, p. 182.



better than it was last fall ; some folks say I grow very fat. I venture to write almost any thing in this letter, because I know the care of the bearer. He will be most sadly disappointed, if you should be broken up before he arrives ; as he is very desirous of being introduced by you to a number of gentlemen of respectable character. I almost envy him, that he should see you before I can. Mr. Thaxter and Mr. Rice present their regards to you. Uncle Quincy, too, sends his love to you. He is very good to call and see me, and so have many other of my friends been. Colonel Warren and lady were here on Monday, and send their love to you. The Colonel promised to write. Mrs. Warren will spend a day or two, on her return, with me. I told Betsey<sup>1</sup> to write to you ; she says she would, if you were her husband.

Your mother sends her love to you ; and all your family, too numerous to name, desire to be remembered. You will receive letters from two, who are as earnest to write to papa, as if the welfare of a kingdom depended upon it. If you can give any guess, within a month, let me know when you think of returning.

Your most affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.<sup>2</sup>

Braintree, 4 May, 1775. ✓

I HAVE but little news to write you. Every thing of that kind you will learn by a more accurate hand than mine. Things remain in much the same situation here, that they were when you went away. There has been no descent

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Adams's sister ; who was afterwards married to the Rev. John Shaw, and to whom several of the letters in this volume were addressed.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Adams was at home during the interval between the sessions of Congress, marked by the dates of this and the preceding letter.

upon the seacoast. Guards are regularly kept ; and people seem more settled, and are returning to their husbandry. I feel somewhat lonely. Mr. Thaxter is gone home. Mr. Rice is going into the army, as captain of a company. We have no school. I know not what to do with John. As government is assumed, I suppose courts of justice will be established, and in that case, there may be business to do. If so, would it not be best for Mr. Thaxter to return ? They seem to be discouraged in the study of law, and think there never will be any business for them. I could have wished they had consulted you upon the subject, before you went away.

I suppose you will receive two or three volumes of that forlorn wretch Hutchinson's letters. Among many other things, I hear he wrote, in 1772, that Deacon Phillips and you had like to have been chosen into the Council, but, if you had, you should have shared the same fate with Bowers.<sup>1</sup> May the fate of Mordecai be his. There is nobody admitted into town yet. I have made two or three attempts to get somebody in, but cannot succeed ; so have not been able to do the business you left in charge with me. I want very much to hear from you, how you stood your journey, and in what state you find yourself now. I felt very anxious about you ; though I endeavoured to be very insensible and heroic, yet my heart felt like a heart of lead. The same night you left me, I heard of Mr. Quincy's death, which, at this time, was a most melancholy event ; especially, as he wrote in minutes, which he left behind, that he had matters of consequence intrusted with him, which, for want of a confidant, must die with him.<sup>2</sup> I went to see his distressed widow last Saturday, at the Colonel's ; and, in the afternoon, from an alarm they had, she and her sister, with three others of the family, took refuge with me and tarried all night. She desired me to present her regards to you, and let you know, she wished you every blessing, — should always

<sup>1</sup> That is, would have received his negative.

<sup>2</sup> See "Memoir of Josiah Quincy, Jr." p. 345.

esteem you, as a sincere friend of her deceased husband. Poor afflicted woman; my heart was wounded for her. I must quit the subject, and entreat you to write me by every opportunity.

Yours,

PORTIA. ✓

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 7 May, 1775.

I RECEIVED by the Deacon two letters<sup>1</sup> from you, this day, from Hartford. I feel a recruit of spirits upon the reception of them, and the comfortable news which they contain. We had not heard any thing from North Carolina before, and could not help feeling anxious, lest we should find a defection there, arising more from their ancient feuds and animosities, than from any settled ill-will in the present contest; but the confirmation of the choice of their delegates by their Assembly, leaves not a doubt of their firmness; nor doth the eye say unto the hand, "I have no need of thee." The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. Great events are most certainly in the womb of futurity; and, if the present chastisements which we experience have a proper influence upon our conduct, the event will certainly be in our favor. The distresses of the inhabitants of Boston are beyond the power of language to describe; there are but very few who are permitted to come out in a day; they delay giving passes, make them wait from hour to hour, and their counsels are not two hours together alike. One day, they shall come out with their effects; the next day, merchandise is not effects. One day, their household furniture is to come out; the next, only wearing apparel; the next, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he refuseth to hearken to them, and will not let the people go.

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letters, 30 April and 2 May, 1775.



May their deliverance be wrought out for them, as it was for the children of Israel. I do not mean by miracles, but by the interposition of Heaven in their favor. They have taken a list of all those who they suppose were concerned in watching the tea, and every other person whom they call obnoxious, and they and their effects are to suffer destruction.

Yours,

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 24 May, 1775.

I SUPPOSE you have had a formidable account of the alarm we had last Sunday morning. When I rose, about six o'clock, I was told, that the drums had been some time beating, and that three alarm guns were fired; that Weymouth bell had been ringing, and Mr. Weld's was then ringing. I immediately sent off an express to know the occasion, and found the whole town in confusion. Three sloops and one cutter had come out and dropped anchor just below Great Hill. It was difficult to tell their designs; some supposed they were coming to Germantown, others, to Weymouth; people, women, children, from the iron-works, came flocking down this way; every woman and child driven off from below my father's; my father's family flying. The Doctor<sup>1</sup> is in great distress, as you may well imagine, for my aunt had her bed thrown into a cart into which she got herself, and ordered the boy to drive her to Bridgewater, which he did. The report was to them, that three hundred had landed, and were upon their march up into town. The alarm flew like lightning, and men from all parts came flocking down, till two thousand were collected. But, it

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cotton Tufts, of Weymouth, well known for many years, as a leading man in the County of Norfolk, had married a daughter of Colonel John Quincy, and, therefore, a sister of Mrs. Adams's mother.

seems, their expedition was to Grape Island for Levett's hay. There it was impossible to reach them, for want of boats; but the sight of so many persons, and the firing at them, prevented their getting more than three tons of hay, though they had carted much more down to the water. At last a lighter was mustered, and a sloop from Hingham, which had six port holes. Our men eagerly jumped on board, and put off for the island. As soon as they perceived it, they decamped. Our people landed upon the island, and in an instant set fire to the hay, which, with the barn, was soon consumed;—about eighty tons, it is said. We expect soon to be in continual alarms, till something decisive takes place. We wait, with longing expectation, in hopes to hear the best accounts from you, with regard to union and harmony, &c. We rejoice greatly on the arrival of Dr. Franklin, as he must certainly be able to inform you very particularly of the situation of affairs in England. I wish you would, if you can get time, be as particular as you *may*, when you write. Every one hereabouts comes to me, to hear what accounts I have. I was so unlucky, as not to get the letter you wrote at New York. Captain Beale forgot it, and left it behind. We have a flying report here, with regard to New York, but cannot give any credit to it, as yet, that they had been engaged with the ships, which Gage sent there, and had taken them, with great loss upon both sides.

Yesterday we had an account of three ships coming into Boston. I believe it is true, as there was a salute from the other ships, though I have not been able to learn from whence they come. I suppose you have had an account of the fire, which did much damage to the warehouses, and added greatly to the distresses of the inhabitants, whilst it continued. The bad conduct of General Gage<sup>1</sup> was the means of its doing so much damage.

Our house has been, upon this alarm, in the same scene of confusion, that it was upon the former. Soldiers coming

<sup>1</sup> He had taken the engines under guard, in consequence of a report, that the liberty party intended to fire the town. See "The Remembrancer," for 1775, pp. 95, 98.

( in for a lodging, for breakfast, for supper, for drink, &c. Sometimes refugees from Boston, tired and fatigued, seek an asylum for a day, a night, a week. You can hardly imagine how we live ; yet,

“ To the houseless child of want,  
Our doors are open still ;  
And, though our portions are but scant,  
We give them with good will.”

My best wishes attend you, both for your health and happiness, and that you may be directed into the wisest and best measures for our safety, and the security of our posterity. I wish you were nearer to us ; we know not what a day will bring forth, nor what distress one hour may throw us into. Hitherto I have been able to maintain a calmness and presence of mind, and hope I shall, let the exigency of the time be what it will. Adieu, breakfast calls.

Your affectionate

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ Weymouth, 15 June, 1775. ✓

I SAT down to write to you on Monday, but really could not compose myself sufficiently ; the anxiety I suffered from not hearing one syllable from you for more than five weeks, and the new distress arising from the arrival of recruits, agitated me more than I have been since the never-to-be-forgotten 14th of April.<sup>1</sup> I have been much revived by receiving two letters from you last night ; one<sup>2</sup> by the servant of your friend, and the other by the gentleman you mention, though they both went to Cambridge, and I have not seen them. I hope to send this, as a return to you.

I feared much for your health, when you went away. I

<sup>1</sup> The day upon which he left her.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Mr. Adams, 29 May, 1775.



must entreat you to be as careful as you can consistently with the duty you owe your country. That consideration, alone, prevailed with me to consent to your departure, in a time so perilous and so hazardous to your family, and with a body so infirm as to require the tenderest care and nursing. I wish you may be supported and divinely assisted in this most important crisis, when the fate of empire depends upon your wisdom and conduct. I greatly rejoice to hear of your union and determination to stand by us.

We cannot but consider the great distance you are from us as a very great misfortune, when our critical situation renders it necessary to hear from you every week, and will be more and more so, as difficulties arise. We now expect our seacoast ravaged; perhaps the very next letter I write will inform you, that I am driven away from our yet quiet cottage. Necessity will oblige Gage to take some desperate steps. We are told for truth, that he is now eight thousand strong. We live in continual expectation of alarms. Courage, I know we have in abundance, — conduct, I hope we shall not want; but powder, — where shall we get a sufficient supply? I wish we may not fail there. Every town is filled with the distressed inhabitants of Boston. Our house among others is deserted, and by this time, like enough, made use of as a barrack. Mr. Bowdoin and his lady are at present in the house of Mrs. Borland, and are going to Middleborough, to the house of Judge Oliver. He, poor gentleman, is so low, that I apprehend he is hastening to a house not made with hands; he looks like a mere skeleton, speaks faint and low, is racked with a violent cough, and, I think, far advanced in a consumption. I went to see him last Saturday. He is very inquisitive of every person with regard to the times; begged I would let him know of the first intelligence I had from you; is very unable to converse by reason of his cough. He rides every pleasant day, and has been kind enough to call at the door (though unable to get out) several times. He says the very name of Hutchinson distresses him. Speaking of him, the other day, he broke out, — “Religious rascal! how I abhor his name.”

Pray be as particular as possible when you write. Everybody wants to hear and to know what is doing, and what may be communicated do not fail to inform me of. All our friends desire to be kindly remembered to you. Gage's proclamation you will receive by this conveyance. All the records of time cannot produce a blacker page. Satan, when driven from the regions of bliss, exhibited not more malice. Surely the father of lies is superseded. Yet we think it the best proclamation he could have issued.

I shall, whenever I can, receive and entertain, in the best manner I am capable, the gentlemen who have so generously proffered their services in our army. Government is wanted in the army and elsewhere. We see the want of it more from so large a body being together, than when each individual was employed in his own domestic circle. My best regards attend every man you esteem. You will make my compliments to Mr. Mifflin and lady. I do not now wonder at the regard the ladies express for a soldier. Every man who wears a cockade appears of double the importance he used to do, and I feel a respect for the lowest subaltern in the army. You tell me you know not when you shall see me. I never trust myself long with the terrors which sometimes intrude themselves upon me.

✓ I hope we shall see each other again, and rejoice together in happier days; the little ones are well, and send duty to papa. Don't fail of letting me hear from you by every opportunity. Every line is like a precious relic of the saints.

I have a request to make of you; something like the barrel of sand, I suppose you will think it, but really of much more importance to me. It is, that you would send out Mr. Bass,<sup>1</sup> and purchase me a bundle of pins and put them in your trunk for me. The cry for pins is so great, that what I used to buy for seven shillings and sixpence, are now twenty shillings, and not to be had for that. A bundle contains six thousand, for which I used to give a dollar;

<sup>1</sup> A man who accompanied Mr. Adams in the capacity of a servant.

but if you can procure them for fifty shillings, or three pounds,<sup>1</sup> pray let me have them.

I am, with the tenderest regard,

Your

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Sunday, 18 June, 1775.

DEAREST FRIEND,

THE day, — perhaps, the decisive day, — is come, on which the fate of America depends. My bursting heart must find vent at my pen. I have just heard, that our dear friend, Dr. Warren, is no more, but fell gloriously fighting for his country ; saying, better to die honorably in the field, than ignominiously hang upon the gallows. Great is our loss. He has distinguished himself in every engagement, by his courage and fortitude, by animating the soldiers, and leading them on by his own example. A particular account of these dreadful, but I hope glorious days, will be transmitted you, no doubt, in the exactest manner.

“The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ; but the God of Israel is he, that giveth strength and power unto his people. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him ; God is a refuge for us.” Charlestown is laid in ashes. The battle began upon our intrenchments upon Bunker’s Hill, Saturday morning about three o’clock, and has not ceased yet, and it is now three o’clock Sabbath afternoon.

It is expected they will come out over the Neck to-night, and a dreadful battle must ensue. Almighty God, cover the heads of our countrymen, and be a shield to our dear friends ! How many have fallen, we know not. The con-

<sup>1</sup> This price must have been caused by the obstructions to trade, as there had been no emission of paper money of importance.



stant roar of the cannon is so distressing, that we cannot eat, drink, or sleep. May we be supported and sustained in the dreadful conflict. I shall tarry here till it is thought unsafe by my friends, and then I have secured myself a retreat at your brother's, who has kindly offered me part of his house. I cannot compose myself to write any further at present. I will add more as I hear further.

Tuesday afternoon.

I have been so much agitated, that I have not been able to write since Sabbath day. When I say, that ten thousand reports are passing, vague and uncertain as the wind, I believe I speak the truth. I am not able to give you any authentic account of last Saturday, but you will not be destitute of intelligence. Colonel Palmer has just sent me word, that he has an opportunity of conveyance. Incorrect as this scrawl will be, it shall go. I ardently pray, that you may be supported through the arduous task you have before you. I wish I could contradict the report of the Doctor's death; but it is a lamentable truth, and the tears of multitudes pay tribute to his memory; those favorite lines of Collins continually sound in my ears;

"How sleep the brave," &c.<sup>1</sup>

I must close, as the Deacon waits. I have not pretended to be particular with regard to what I have heard, because I know you will collect better intelligence. The spirits of the people are very good; the loss of Charlestown affects them no more than a drop of the bucket. I am, most sincerely,

Yours,

PORTIA.

<sup>1</sup> Collins's Ode is too well known to need insertion.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

22 June, 1775.

I RECEIVED yours of June 10th,<sup>1</sup> for which I thank you. I want you to be more particular. Does every member feel for us? Can they realize what we suffer? And can they believe, with what patience and fortitude we endure the conflict? Nor do we even tremble at the frowns of power.

You inquire of me who were at the engagement at Grape Island. I may say, with truth, all of Weymouth, Braintree, Hingham, who were able to bear arms, and hundreds from other towns within twenty, thirty, and forty miles of Weymouth. Our good friend, the Doctor,<sup>2</sup> is in a miserable state of health, and hardly able to go from his own house to my father's. Danger, you know, sometimes makes timid men bold. He stood that day very well, and generously attended, with drink, biscuit, flints, &c., five hundred men, without taking any pay. He has since been chosen one of the Committee of Correspondence for that town, and has done much service, by establishing a regular method of alarm from town to town. Both your brothers were there; your younger brother, with his company, who gained honor by their good order that day. He was one of the first to venture on board a schooner, to land upon the island. As to Chelsea, I cannot be so particular, as I know only in general, that Colonel Putnam commanded there, and had many gentlemen volunteers. We have two companies stationed in this town; at Germantown, Captain Turner; at Squantum, Captain Vinton; in Weymouth, one; in Hingham, two, &c. I believe I shall remove your books this week to your brother's. We think it advisable. Colonel Quincy has procured his family a retreat at Deacon Holbrook's. Mr. Cranch has one at Major Bass's, in case of necessity, to which we

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter of that date.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tufts.

hope not to be driven. We hear, that the troops destined for New York are all expected here ; but we have got to that pass, that a whole legion of them would not intimidate us. I think I am very brave, upon the whole. If danger comes near my dwelling, I suppose I shall shudder. We want powder, but, with the blessing of Heaven, we fear them not. Write every opportunity you can.

I am Yours,

PORTIA.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 25 June, 1775.

DEAREST FRIEND.

My father has been more afflicted by the destruction of Charlestown than by any thing which has heretofore taken place. Why should not his countenance be sad, when the city, the place of his father's sepulchre, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Scarcely one stone remaineth upon another ; but in the midst of sorrow we have abundant cause of thankfulness, that so few of our brethren are numbered with the slain, whilst our enemies were cut down like the grass before the scythe. But one officer of all the Welsh fusileers remains to tell his story. Many poor wretches die for want of proper assistance and care of their wounds.

Every account agrees in fourteen or fifteen hundred slain and wounded upon their side, nor can I learn that they dissemble the number themselves. We had some heroes that day, who fought with amazing intrepidity and courage.

“ Extremity is the trier of spirits ;  
 — common chances common men can bear ; ”  
 And “ when the sea is calm, all boats alike  
 Show mastership in floating. But fortune's blows,  
 When most struck home, being *bravely* warded, crave  
 A noble cunning.”



I hear that General Howe said, that the battle upon the plains of Abram was but a bauble to this. When we consider all the circumstances, attending this action, we stand astonished that our people were not all cut off. They had but one hundred feet entrenched, the number who were engaged did not exceed eight hundred, and they with not half ammunition enough; the reinforcement not able to get to them seasonably. The tide was up, and high, so that their floating batteries came upon each side of the causeway, and their row-galleys kept a continual fire. Added to this, the fire from Cops Hill, and from the ships; the town in flames, all around them, and the heat from the flames so intense as scarcely to be borne; the day one of the hottest we have had this season, and the wind blowing the smoke in their faces, — only figure to yourself all these circumstances, and then consider that we do not count sixty men lost.<sup>1</sup> My heart overflows at the recollection.

We live in continual expectation of hostilities. Scarcely a day that does not produce some; but, like good Nehemiah, having made our prayer unto God, and set the people with their swords, their spears, and their bows, we will say unto them, “Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your houses.”

I have just received yours of the 17th of June, in seven days only; every line from that far<sup>2</sup> country is precious; you do not tell me how you do, but I will hope better. Alas you little thought what distress we were in the day you wrote.<sup>3</sup> They delight in molesting us upon the Sabbath. Two Sabbaths we have been in such alarm that we have

<sup>1</sup> This was below the truth; but accuracy in these details will not be looked for in a letter written at the moment, upon information necessarily defective.

<sup>2</sup> The younger generation of the present day may need to be reminded that the “far country,” a letter from which had arrived “in seven days only,” was Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> By reference to Mr. Adams’s letter of that date it will be seen that it gives her the first intelligence of the election of Washington to the chief command.

had no meeting ; this day we have sat under our own vine in quietness ; have heard Mr. Taft, from Psalms, " The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." The good man was earnest and pathetic ; I could forgive his weakness for the sake of his sincerity, but I long for a Cooper and an Eliot. I want a person, who has feeling and sensibility, who can take one up with him,

And " in his duty prompt, at every call,"  
Can " watch, and weep, and pray, and feel for all."

Mr. Rice joins General Heath's regiment to-morrow, as adjutant. Your brother is very desirous of being in the army, but your good mother is really violent against it. I cannot persuade nor reason her into a consent. Neither he nor I dare let her know that he is trying for a place. My brother has a captain's commission, and is stationed at Cambridge. I thought you had the best of intelligence, or I should have taken pains to be more particular. As to Boston, there are many persons yet there, who would be glad to get out if they could. Mr. Boylston, and Mr. Gill, the printer, with his family, are held upon the black list, it is said. 'Tis certain they watch them so narrowly, that they cannot escape. Mr. Mather got out a day or two before Charlestown was destroyed, and had lodged his papers and what else he got out, at Mr. Cary's, but they were all consumed ; so were many other people's who thought they might trust their little there, till teams could be procured to remove them. The people from the almshouse and workhouse were sent to the lines, last week, to make room for their wounded, they say. Medford people are all removed. Every seaport seems in motion. O North, may the groans and cries of the injured and oppressed harrow up thy soul. We have a prodigious army, but we lack many accommodations, which we need. I hope the appointment of these new generals will give satisfaction ; they must be proof against calumny. In a contest like this, continual reports are circulated by our enemies, and they catch with the unwary and the gaping crowd, who are

ready to listen to the marvellous, without considering of consequences, even though their best friends are injured.

I have not ventured to inquire one word of you about your return. I do not know whether I ought to wish for it; it seems as if your sitting together was absolutely necessary, whilst every day is big with events.

Mr. Bowdoin called Friday, and took his leave of me, desiring I would present his affectionate regards to you. I have hopes that he will recover, he has mended a good deal. He wished he could have stayed in Braintree, but his lady was fearful.

Yours evermore,

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 5 July, 1775. ✓

I HAVE received a good deal of paper from you. I wish it had been more covered; the writing is very scant, yet I must not grumble. I know your time is not yours nor mine. Your labors must be great and your mouth closed; but all you may communicate, I beg you would. There is a pleasure, I know not whence it arises, nor can I stop now to find it out, but I say there is a degree of pleasure in being able to tell news, especially any that so nearly concerns us, as all your proceedings do. ✓

I should have been more particular, but I thought you knew every thing that passed here. The present state of the inhabitants of Boston is that of the most abject slaves, under the most cruel and despotic of tyrants. Among many instances I could mention, let me relate one. Upon the 17th of June, printed handbills were posted up at the corners of the streets and upon houses, forbidding any inhabitants to go upon their houses, or upon any eminence, on pain of death; the inhabitants dared not to look out of their houses, nor to be heard or seen to ask a question. Our prisoners were brought over to the Long Wharf, and there lay all night, without any care of their wounds or



any resting-place but the pavements, until the next day, when they exchanged it for the jail, since which we hear they are civilly treated. Their living cannot be good, as they can have no fresh provisions ; their beef, we hear, is all gone, and their wounded men die very fast, so that they have a report that the bullets were poisoned. Fish they cannot have, they have rendered it so difficult to procure ; and the admiral is such a villain as to oblige every fishing schooner to pay a dollar every time it goes out. The money that has been paid for passes is incredible. Some have given ten, twenty, thirty, and forty dollars, to get out with a small proportion of their things. It is reported and believed, that they have taken up a number of persons and committed them to jail, we know not for what in particular. Master Lovell is confined in the dungeon ; a son of Mr. Edes is in jail, and one Wiburt, a ship carpenter, is now upon trial for his life. God alone knows to what length these wretches will go, and will I hope restrain their malice.

I would not have you be distressed about me. Danger, they say, makes people valiant. Hitherto I have been distressed, but not dismayed. I have felt for my country and her sons. I have bled with them and for them. Not all the havoc and devastation they have made, has wounded me like the death of Warren. We want him in the Senate ; we want him in his profession ; we want him in the field. We mourn for the citizen, the senator, the physician, and the warrior. May we have others raised up in his room.

I have had a very kind and friendly visit from our dear friends Colonel Warren, lady, and son. Mrs. Warren spent almost a week with me, and he came and met her here, and kept Sabbath with me. I suppose she will write to you, though she says you are in her debt.

You scarcely make mention of Dr. Franklin. Surely he must be a valuable member. Pray, what is become of your Judas ?<sup>1</sup> I see he is not with you upon the list of delegates.

<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain who is alluded to here ; probably Mr. Galloway, of Pennsylvania, who was a member of the first Congress, resisted the measures adopt-

I wish I could come and see you. I never suffer myself to think you are about returning soon. Can it, will it be? May I ask — may I wish for it? When once I expect you, the time will crawl till I see you. But hush! Do you know it is eleven o'clock at night? We have had some very fine rains since I wrote you last. I hope we shall not now have famine added to war. Grain, grain is what we want here. Meat we have enough, and to spare. Pray don't let Bass forget my pins. Hardwick has applied to me for Mr. Bass to get him a hundred of needles, number six, to carry on his stocking weaving. We shall very soon have no coffee, nor sugar, nor pepper here; but whortleberries and milk we are not obliged to commerce for. I saw a letter of yours to Colonel Palmer, by General Washington. I hope I have one too.<sup>1</sup> Good night. With thoughts of thee do I close my eyes. Angels guard and protect thee; and may a safe return ere long bless thy

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 16 July, 1775.

DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAVE seen your letters to Colonels Palmer and Warren. I pity your embarrassments. How difficult the task to quench the fire and the pride of private ambition, and to sacrifice ourselves and all our hopes and expectations to the public weal! How few have souls capable of so noble an undertaking! How often are the laurels worn by those who have had no share in earning them! But there is a future recompense of reward, to which the upright man looks, and which he will most assuredly obtain, provided he perseveres unto the end.

The appointment of the generals Washington and Lee by it, and subsequently became one of the most active of the loyal refugees. See Franklin's Works, edited by Jared Sparks. Vol. viii. p. 145, note.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams's letter, 18 June, 1775.

gives universal satisfaction. The people have the highest opinion of Lee's abilities, but you know the continuation of the popular breath depends much upon favorable events. I had the pleasure of seeing both the generals and their aids-de-camp soon after their arrival, and of being personally made known to them. They very politely express their regard for you. Major Mifflin said he had orders from you to visit me at Braintree. I told him I should be very happy to see him there, and accordingly sent Mr. Thaxter to Cambridge with a card, to him and Mr. Read, to dine with me. Mrs. Warren and her son were to be with me. They very politely received the message, and lamented that they were not able to come, upon account of expresses which they were on that day to get in readiness to send off.

I was struck with General Washington. You had prepared me to entertain a favorable opinion of him, but I thought the half was not told me. Dignity with ease and complacency, the gentleman and soldier, look agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face. Those lines of Dryden instantly occurred to me ;

“ Mark his majestic fabric ! he 's a temple  
Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine ;  
His soul 's the deity that lodges there ;  
Nor is the pile unworthy of the god.”

General Lee looks like a careless, hardy veteran, and, by his appearance, brought to my mind his namesake, Charles the Twelfth, of Sweden. The elegance of his pen far exceeds that of his person.

You have made frequent complaints that your friends do not write to you. I have stirred up some of them. May not I in my turn make complaints? All the letters I receive from you seem to be written in so much haste, that they scarcely leave room for a social feeling. They let me know that you exist, but some of them contain scarcely six lines. I want some sentimental effusions of the heart. I am sure you are not destitute of them ; or are they all absorbed in the great public? Much is due to that, I know but, being part of the public, I lay claim to a larger share



than I have had. You used to be more communicative on Sundays. I always loved a Sabbath day's letter, for then you had a greater command of your time; but hush to all complaints.

I am much surprised that you have not been more accurately informed of what passes in the camps. As to intelligence from Boston, it is but very seldom we are able to collect any thing that may be relied on; and to report the vague, flying rumors, would be endless. I heard yesterday, by one Mr. Roulstone, a goldsmith, who got out in a fishing schooner, that their distress increased upon them fast. Their beef is all spent; their malt and cider all gone. All the fresh provisions they can procure, they are obliged to give to the sick and wounded. Thirteen of our men who were in jail, and were wounded at the battle of Charlestown, were dead. No man dared now to be seen talking to his friend in the street. They were obliged to be within, every evening, at ten o'clock, according to martial law; nor could any inhabitant walk any street in town after that time, without a pass from Gage. He has ordered all the molasses to be distilled into rum for the soldiers; taken away all licenses, and given out others, obliging to a forfeiture of ten pounds, if any rum is sold without written orders from the general. He gives much the same account of the killed and wounded we have from others. The spirit, he says, which prevails among the soldiers, is a spirit of malice and revenge; there is no true courage and bravery to be observed among them. Their duty is hard; always mounting guard with their packs at their backs, ready for an alarm, which they live in continual hazard of. Dr. Eliot is not on board a man-of-war, as has been reported, but perhaps was left in town, as the comfort and support of those who cannot escape. He was constantly with our prisoners. Messrs. Lovell and Leach, with others, are certainly in jail. A poor milch cow was last week killed in town, and sold for a shilling sterling per pound. The transports arrived last week from York, but every additional man adds to their distress. There has been a little expedition this week to

Long Island.<sup>1</sup> There have been, before, several attempts to go on, but three men-of-war lay near, and cutters all round the island, so that they could not succeed. A number of whaleboats lay at Germantown. Three hundred volunteers, commanded by one Captain Tupper, came on Monday evening and took the boats, went on, and brought off seventy odd sheep, fifteen head of cattle, and sixteen prisoners, thirteen of whom were sent by (Simple Sapling)<sup>2</sup> to mow the hay, which they had very badly executed. They were all asleep in the house and barn. When they were taken, there were three women with them. Our heroes came off in triumph, not being observed by their enemies. This spirited up others, who could not endure the thought that the house and barn should afford them any shelter ; — they did not destroy them the night before for fear of being discovered. Captain Wild, of this town, with about twenty-five of his company ; Captain Gold, of Weymouth, with as many of his, and some other volunteers, to the amount of a hundred, obtained leave to go on and destroy the hay, together with the house and barn ; and in open day, in full view of the men-of-war, they set off from the *Moon*,<sup>3</sup> so called, covered by a number of men who were placed there, — went on and set fire to the buildings and hay. A number of armed cutters immediately surrounded the island and fired upon our men. They came off with a hot and continued fire upon them, the bullets flying in every direction, and the men-of-war's boats plying them with small arms. Many in this town, who were spectators, expected every moment our men would all be sacrificed, for sometimes they were so near as to be called and damned by their enemies, and ordered to surrender ; yet they all returned in safety, not one man even wounded. Upon the Moon we lost one man, from the cannon on board the man-of-war. On the evening of the same day, a man-

<sup>1</sup> In Boston harbor. This event is repeatedly noticed in "The Remembrancer," for 1775, pp. 242, 257, 262.

<sup>2</sup> These are the words in the original, but the Editor cannot explain them.

<sup>3</sup> The name given to a small island in Boston harbor.



of-war came and anchored near Great Hill, and two cutters came to Pig Rocks. It occasioned an alarm in this town, and we were up all night. They remain there yet, but have not ventured to land any men.

This town have chosen their representative. Colonel Palmer is the man. There was a considerable muster upon Thayer's side, and Vinton's company marched up in order to assist, but got sadly disappointed. Newcomb insisted upon it that no man should vote who was in the army. He had no notion of being under the military power; said we might be so situated as to have the greater part of the people engaged in the military, and then all power would be wrested out of the hands of the civil magistrate. He insisted upon its being put to vote, and carried his point immediately. It brought Thayer to his speech, who said all he could against it.

As to the situation of the camps, our men are in general healthy, much more so at Roxbury than at Cambridge, and the camp is in vastly better order. General Thomas has the character of an excellent officer. His merit has certainly been overlooked, as modest merit generally is. I hear General Washington is much pleased with his conduct.

Every article here in the West India way is very scarce and dear. In six weeks we shall not be able to purchase any article of the kind. I wish you would let Bass get me one pound of pepper, and two yards of black calamanco for shoes. I cannot wear leather, if I go barefoot. Bass may make a fine profit if he lays in a stock for himself. You can hardly imagine how much we want many common small articles, which are not manufactured amongst ourselves; but we will have them in time; not one pin to be purchased for love or money. I wish you could convey me a thousand by any friend travelling this way. It is very provoking to have such a plenty so near us, but, Tantalus-like, not be able to touch. I should have been glad to have laid in a small stock of the West India articles, but I cannot get one copper; no person thinks of paying any thing, and I do not choose to run in debt. I endeavour to live in the



most frugal manner possible — but I am many times distressed.

We have, since I wrote you, had many fine showers, and, although the crops of grass have been cut short, we have a fine prospect of Indian corn and English grain. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, the tree beareth her fruit, the vine and the olive yield their increase. We have not yet been much distressed for grain. Every thing at present looks blooming. O that peace would once more extend her olive branch ;

“ This day be bread and peace my lot ;  
 All else beneath the sun,  
 Thou knowest if best bestowed or not,  
 And let thy will be done.”

“ But is the Almighty ever bound to please,  
 Build by my wish, or studious of my ease ?  
 Shall I determine where his frowns shall fall,  
 And fence my grotto from the lot of all ?  
 Prostrate, his sovereign wisdom I adore,  
 Intreat his mercy, but I dare no more.”

I have now written you all I can collect from every quarter. 'Tis fit for no eyes but yours, because you can make all necessary allowances. I cannot copy.

There are yet in town three of the selectmen and some thousands of inhabitants, 't is said. I hope to hear from you soon. Do let me know if there is any prospect of seeing you? Next Wednesday is thirteen weeks since you went away. I must bid you adieu.

You have many friends; though they have not noticed you by writing. I am sorry they have been so negligent. I hope no share of that blame lies upon

Your most affectionate

PORTIA.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 25 July, 1775.

DEAREST FRIEND,

I RECEIVED yours of July 7th,<sup>1</sup> for which I heartily thank you. It was the longest and best letter I have had ; the most leisurely, and therefore the most sentimental. Previous to your last, I had written you, and made some complaints of you, but I will take them all back again. Only continue your obliging favors, whenever your time will allow you to devote one moment to your absent Portia.

This is the 25th of July. Gage has not made any attempts to march out since the battle at Charlestown. Our army is restless, and wish to be doing something to rid themselves and the land of the vermin and locusts which infest it. Since I wrote you last, the companies stationed upon the coast, both in this town, Weymouth, and Hingham, were ordered to Nantasket, to reap and bring off the grain, which they accomplished, all except a field or two which was not ripe ; and having whaleboats, they undertook to go to the Lighthouse and set fire to it, which they effected in open day, and in fair sight of several men-of-war. Upon their return, came down upon them eight barges, one cutter, and one schooner, all in battle array, and poured whole broadsides upon them ; but our men all reached the shore, and not one life lost, two only slightly wounded in their legs. They marched up a hill, and drew into order, in hopes the marines would land ; but they chose rather to return without a land engagement, though 't is thought they will burn the town down as soon as our forces leave it. I had this account from Captain Vinton, who with his company were there. These little skirmishes seem trifling, but they serve to inure our men, and harden them to danger. I hear the rebels are very wroth at the destruction of the lighthouse.

<sup>1</sup> This letter will be found among those of Mr. Adams, published in 1841.

There has been an offer from Gage to send the poor of Boston to Salem, by water, but not complied with on our part; they returned for answer, they would receive them upon the lines. Dr. Tufts saw a letter from Deacon Newall, in which he mentions the death of John Cotton; he says it is very sickly in town. Every fishing vessel is now obliged to enter and clear out, as though she was going a foreign voyage. No inhabitant is suffered to partake, but obliged to wait till the army is supplied, and then, if one remains, they are allowed to purchase it. An order has been given out in town, that no person shall be seen to wipe his face with a white handkerchief. The reason I hear is, that it is a signal of mutiny. General Burgoyne lives in Mr. Sam Quincy's house. A lady, who lived opposite, says she saw raw meat cut and hacked upon her mahogany tables, and her superb damask curtain and cushions exposed to the rain, as if they were of no value. How much better do the Tories fare than the Whigs? I suppose this worthy, good man was put in with all confidence that nothing should be hurt.

I was very much pleased with General Lee's letter,<sup>1</sup> and really entertained a more favorable opinion of Burgoyne than I before had imbibed from his speech; but a late letter from London, written to Mr. Josiah Quincy, and, in case of his absence, to be opened either by you or Mr. Samuel Adams, or either of the Warrens, has left me no room to think that he is possessed either of generosity, virtue, or humanity. His character runs thus:

"As to Burgoyne,<sup>2</sup> I am not master of language sufficient to give you a true idea of the horrible wickedness of the man. His designs are dark; his dissimulation of the deepest dye; for, not content with deceiving mankind, he practises deceit on God himself, by assuming the appearance

<sup>1</sup> This correspondence between Lee and Burgoyne, is in "The Remembrancer," for 1775, pp. 150 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Much allowance must occasionally be made for the excitement naturally growing out of the circumstances of the war. General Burgoyne by no means bore any such character as this.



(like Hutchinson) of great attention to religious worship, when every action of his life is totally abhorrent to all ideas of true religion, virtue, or common honesty. An abandoned, infamous gambler, of broken fortune, and the worst and most detestable of the Bedford gang, who are wholly bent on blood, tyranny, and spoil, and therefore the darling favorite of our unrivalled ruler, Lord Bute."

The character of Howe is not drawn much more favorably, but Clinton's general character very good, and 't is said he does not relish the service he is sent upon. I am ready to believe this of Clinton, as I have never heard of any speeches of his since his arrival, nor scarcely any mention of him. That such characters as Burgoyne and Howe should engage in such a cause is not to be wondered at; but it is really to be lamented, when a man, possessed of one spark of virtue, should be drawn aside, and disgrace himself and posterity by adding one more to the already infamous list. I suppose you have heard of Darby's arrival,<sup>1</sup> and the intelligence he brings. I could not refrain wishing them everlasting fetters; "the news received with some symptoms of pleasure," and "our friends increased," and a few more such sugar plums. Were they suffering as we are, could Americans sit thus coldly whilst Britons were bleeding? How is it possible, that the love of gain and the lust of domination should render the human mind so callous to every principle of honor, generosity and benevolence?

May that day be far distant from America, when "trade's unfeeling train," shall "usurp this land, and dispossess the swain."

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

Your address meets with general approbation here; your petitioning the King again, pleases (forgive me if I say the

<sup>1</sup> From England.

timid and the weak) those persons who were esteemed the lukewarm, and who think no works of supererogation can be performed to Great Britain ; whilst others say you heap coals of fire upon the heads of your enemies. You know you are considered here as a most perfect body ; if one member is by any means rendered incapable of acting, 't is supposed the deficiency will be made up. The query is, why your President left the Congress so long as to make it necessary to choose another member,—whether he declined returning to you again ?

I suppose you have a list of our Council. It was generally thought that Gage would make an attempt to come out either Election day, or upon the Fast ; but I could not believe we should be disturbed upon that day. Even “the devils believe and tremble,” and I really believe they are more afraid of the Americans’ prayers than of their swords. I could not bear to hear our inanimate old bachelor. Mrs. Cranch and I took our chaise and went to hear Mr. Haven, of Dedham, and we had no occasion to repent eleven miles’ ride ; especially as I had the pleasure of spending the day with my namesake and sister delegate. Why should we not assume your titles when we give you up our names ? I found her comfortably situated in a little country cottage, with patience, perseverance, and fortitude for her companions, and in better health than she has enjoyed for many months past.

I fear General Thomas being overlooked, and Heath placed over him, will create much uneasiness. I know not who was to blame, but it is likely to make a great and fatal gap in the army. If Thomas resigns, all his officers resign ; and Mr. Thomas cannot with honor hold under Heath. The camp will evince to every eye how good an officer he has been ; but this is out of my sphere. I only say what others say, and what the general disposition of the people is.

I believe you will not complain that I do not write often enough, and at length enough. When you are tired, tell me. Pray make my compliments to Mr. Barrell for his

great civility<sup>1</sup> to Portia. I really feel very anxious at being exposed to any eyes but yours, whose partiality I have so often experienced to cover a multitude of faults, that I rely upon it with the utmost security. You will not fail letting me hear from you by every opportunity.

I need not say how much I want to see you, but no one will credit my story of your returning in a month. I hope to have the best of proofs to convince them.

It cannot need any to convince you how sincerely

I am your affectionate

PORTIA.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 31 July, 1775.

I do not feel easy more than two days together without writing to you. If you abound, you must lay some of the fault upon yourself, who have made such sad complaints for letters; but I really believe I have written more than all my sister delegates. There is nothing new transpired since I wrote you last, but the sailing of some transports, and five deserters having come into our camp. One of them is gone, I hear, to Philadelphia. I think I should be cautious of him. No one can tell the secret designs of such fellows, whom no oath binds. He may be sent with assassinating designs. I can credit any villany, that a Cæsar Borgia would have been guilty of, or Satan himself would rejoice in. Those who do not scruple to bring poverty, misery, slavery, and death upon thousands, will not hesitate at the most diabolical crimes; and this is Britain. Blush, O Americans, that ever you derived your origin from such a race.

We learn from one of these deserters, that our ever-valued friend, Warren, dear to us even in death, was not

<sup>1</sup> His present of pins, as stated in Mr. Adams's letter, to which this is in answer.



treated with any more respect than a common soldier ; but the savage wretches, called officers, consulted together, and agreed to sever his head from his body and carry it in triumph to Gage, who no doubt would have “ grinned horribly a ghastly smile,” instead of imitating Cæsar, who, far from being gratified with so horrid a spectacle as the head even of his enemy, turned away from Pompey’s with disgust, and gave vent to his pity in a flood of tears. How much does Pagan tenderness put Christian benevolence to shame ! What humanity could not obtain, the rites and ceremonies of a mason demanded. An officer, who, it seems, was one of the brotherhood, requested, that as a mason, he might have the body unmangled, and find a decent interment for it. He obtained his request, but, upon returning to secure it, he found it already thrown into the earth, only with the ceremony of being first placed there with many bodies over him :

“ Nor writ his name, whose tomb should pierce the skies.”

“ Glows my resentment into guilt ? What guilt  
Can equal violations of the dead ?  
The dead how sacred ! Sacred is the dust  
Of this heaven-labored form, erect, divine !  
This heaven-assumed, majestic robe of earth.”

2 August.

Thus far I wrote and broke off ; hearing there was a probability of your return, I thought not to send it ; but the reception of yours<sup>1</sup> this morning, of July 23d, makes me think the day further off than I hoped. I therefore will add a few lines, though very unfit. I went out yesterday to attend the funeral of the poor fellow who, the night before, fell in battle, as they were returning from the lighthouse ; I caught some cold. Sabbath evening there was a warm fire from Prospect Hill and Bunker’s Hill, begun first by the riflemen taking off their guard. Two men upon our side were killed ; five of their guards were killed, two taken. I believe my account will be very confused, but I will relate

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr. Adams, 23 July, 1775.

it as well as I am able.<sup>1</sup> Sabbath evening a number of men, in whaleboats, went off from Squantum and Dorchester, to the lighthouse, where the general, Gage, had again fixed up a lamp, and sent twelve carpenters to repair it. Our people went on amidst a hot fire from thirty marines, who were placed there as a guard to the Tory carpenters, burnt the dwelling-house, took the Tories and twenty-eight marines, killed the lieutenant and one man, brought off all the oil and stores which were sent, without the loss of a man, until they were upon their return ; when they were so closely pursued, that they were obliged to run one whaleboat ashore, and leave her to them ; the rest arrived safe, except the unhappy youth, whose funeral I yesterday attended, who received a ball through the temple, as he was rowing the boat. He belonged to Rhode Island. His name was Griffin. He, with four wounded marines, was brought by Captain Turner to Germantown, and buried from there with the honors of war. Mr. Wibird, upon the occasion, made the best oration (he never prays, you know,) I ever heard from him. The poor wounded fellows (who were all wounded in their arms) desired they might attend. They did, and he very pathetically addressed them, with which they appeared affected. I spoke with them, — I told them, it was very unhappy that they should be obliged to fight their best friends. They said they were sorry ; they hoped in God an end would be speedily put to the unhappy contest ; when they came, they came in the way of their duty, to relieve Admiral Montague, with no thought of fighting, but their situation was such as obliged them to obey orders ; but they wished, with all their souls, that they that sent them here had been in the heat of the battle ; expressed gratitude at the kindness they received ; and said in that they had been deceived, for they were told, if they were taken alive, they would be sacrificed by us. Dr. Tufts dressed their wounds.

I had a design to write something about a talked of ap-

<sup>1</sup> These events are briefly mentioned in "The Remembrancer," for the year 1775, pp. 269, 270.

pointment of a friend of mine to a judicial department,<sup>1</sup> but hope soon to see that friend, before his acceptance may be necessary. I enclose a compliment, copied by a gentleman from a piece in the Worcester paper, signed "Lycurgus."

I can add no more, as the good Colonel Palmer waits. Only my compliments to Mrs. Mifflin, and tell her I do not know whether her husband is safe here. Bellona and Cupid have a contest about him. You hear nothing from the ladies but about Major Mifflin's easy address, politeness, complaisance, &c. 'Tis well he has so agreeable a lady at Philadelphia. They know nothing about forts, intrenchments, &c., when they return; or, if they do, they are all forgotten and swallowed up in his accomplishments.

Adieu, my dearest friend, and always believe me

Unalterably yours,

PORTIA.

TO JOHN ADAMS.<sup>2</sup>

✓ Weymouth, 1 October, 1775.

HAVE pity upon me. Have pity upon me, O thou my beloved, for the hand of God presseth me sore.

Yet will I be dumb and silent, and not open my mouth, because thou, O Lord, hast done it.

✓ How can I tell you, (O my bursting heart!) that my dear mother has left me? — this day, about five o'clock, she left this world for an infinitely better.

After sustaining sixteen days' severe conflict, nature fainted, and she fell asleep. Blessed spirit! where art thou? At times, I am almost ready to faint under this severe and heavy stroke, separated from *thee*, who used to be a comforter to me in affliction; but, blessed be God, his

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams was made Chief Justice of the State Court, but never acted in that capacity.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Adams was at home during the adjournment of Congress, from the first of August to the 5th of September.



ear is not heavy that he cannot hear, but he has bid us call upon him in time of trouble.

I know you are a sincere and hearty mourner with me, and will pray for me in my affliction. My poor father, like a firm believer and a good Christian, sets before his children the best of examples of patience and submission. My sisters send their love to you, and are greatly afflicted. You often expressed your anxiety for me when you left me before, surrounded with terrors; but my trouble then was as the small dust in the balance, compared to what I have since endured. I hope to be properly mindful of the correcting hand, that I may not be rebuked in anger.

You will pardon and forgive all my wanderings of mind, I cannot be correct.

'T is a drèadful time with the whole province. Sickness and death are in almost every family. I have no more shocking and terrible idea of any distemper, except the plague, than this.<sup>1</sup>

Almighty God! restrain the pestilence which walketh in darkness and wasteth at noonday, and which has laid in the dust one of the dearest of parents. May the life of the other be lengthened out to his afflicted children.

From your distressed

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 21 October, 1775. ✓

THE sickness has abated here and in the neighbouring towns. In Boston I am told it is very sickly among the inhabitants and the soldiery. By a man, one Haskins, who

<sup>1</sup> The dysentery prevailed among the British troops, who were great sufferers from their confinement in Boston, and it appears to have spread among the inhabitants in the vicinity. Mrs. Adams lost, besides her mother and a brother of her husband, a domestic in her own house; but she and the rest of her family, who were all, with a single exception, more or less ill, recovered.

came out the day before yesterday, I learn, that there are but about twenty-five hundred soldiers in town. How many there are at Charlestown, he could not tell. He had been in irons three weeks, some malicious fellow having said that he saw him at the battle of Lexington; but he proved that he was not out of Boston that day, upon which he was released, and went with two other men out in a small boat, under their eye to fish. They played about near the shore, while catching small fish, till they thought they could possibly reach Dorchester Neck; no sooner were they perceived attempting to escape, than they had twenty cannons discharged at them, but they all happily reached the shore. He says, no language can paint the distress of the inhabitants; most of them destitute of wood and of provisions of every kind. The bakers say, unless they have a new supply of wood, they cannot bake above one fortnight longer; their biscuit are not above one half the former size; the soldiers are obliged to do very hard duty, and are uneasy to a great degree, many of them declaring they will not continue much longer in such a state, but at all hazards will escape. The inhabitants are desperate, and contriving means of escape. A floating battery of ours, went out two nights ago, and rowed near the town, and then discharged their guns. Some of the balls went into the workhouse, some through the tents in the Common, and one through the sign of the Lamb Tavern. He says, it drove them all out of the Common, men, women, and children screaming, and threw them into the utmost distress; but, very unhappily for us, in the discharge of one of the cannon, the ball not being properly rammed down, it split and killed two men, and wounded seven more, upon which they were obliged to return. He also says, that the Tories are much distressed about the fate of Dr. Church, and very anxious to obtain him, and would exchange Lovell for him. This man is so exasperated at the ill usage he has received from them, that he is determined to enlist immediately. They almost starved him whilst he was in irons. He says, he hopes it will be in his power to send some of them to

heaven for mercy. They are building a fort by the hay-market, and rending down houses for timber to do it with. In the course of the last week, several persons have found means to escape. One of them says it is talked in town, that Howe will issue a proclamation, giving liberty to all, who will not take up arms, to depart the town, and making it death to have any intercourse with the country afterwards.

At present it looks as if there was no likelihood of peace ; the ministry are determined to proceed at all events ; the people are already slaves, and have neither virtue nor spirit to help themselves nor us. The time is hastening, when George, like Richard, may cry, " My kingdom for a horse ! " and want even that wealth to make the purchase. I hope by degrees, we shall be inured to hardships, and become a virtuous, valiant people, forgetting our former luxury, and each one apply with industry and frugality to manufactures and husbandry, till we rival all other nations by our virtues.

I thank you for your amusing account of the Quaker ; their great stress with regard to color in their dress, &c., is not the only ridiculous part of their sentiments with regard to religious matters.

" There 's not a day but to the man of thought  
Betrays some secret, that throws new reproach  
On life, and makes him sick of seeing more."

What are your thoughts with regard to Dr. Church ? Had you much knowledge of him ? I think you had no intimate acquaintance with him.

" A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man ;  
Some sinister intent taints all he does."

It is matter of great speculation what will be his punishment ; the people are much enraged against him ; if he is set at liberty, even after he has received a severe punishment, I do not think he will be safe. He will be despised and detested by every one, and many suspicions will remain in the minds of people in regard to our rulers ; they are for



supposing *this* person is not sincere, and *that* one they have jealousy of.

Have you any prospect of returning? I hoped to have heard from you by the gentlemen who came as a committee here ; but they have been here a week, and I have not any letters.

My father and sister Betsey desire to be remembered to you. He is very disconsolate. It makes my heart ache to see him, and I know not how to go to the house. He said to me the other day, "Child, I see your mother, go to what part of the house I will." I think he has lost almost as much flesh as if he had been sick ; and Betsey, poor girl, looks broken and worn with grief. These near connexions, how they twist and cling about the heart, and when torn off, draw the best blood from it.

"Each friend by fate snatched from us, is a plume  
Plucked from the wing of human vanity."

Be so good as to present my regards to Mrs. Hancock. I hope she is very happy. Mrs. Warren called upon me on her way to Watertown. I wish I could as easily come to you as she can go to Watertown. But it is my lot. In the twelve years we have been married, I believe we have not lived together more than six.

If you could, with any conveniency, procure me the articles I wrote for, I should be very glad, more especially the needles and cloth ; they are in such demand, that we are really distressed for want of them.

Adieu. I think of nothing further to add, but that I am, with the tenderest regard, your

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 22 October, 1775.

MR. LOTHROP called here this evening, and brought me

yours'<sup>1</sup> of the 1st of October; a day which will ever be remembered by me, for it was the most distressing one I ever experienced. That morning I rose, and went into my mother's room, not apprehending her so near her exit; went to her bed with a cup of tea in my hand, and raised her head to give it to her. She swallowed a few drops, gasped, and fell back upon her pillow, opening her eyes with a look that pierced my heart, and which I shall never forget; it was the eagerness of a last look;

“And O, the last sad silence of a friend.”

Yet she lived till five o'clock that day, but I could not be with her. My dear father prayed twice beside her bed that day. God Almighty was with him and supported him that day, and enabled him to go through the services of it. It was his communion day; he had there a tender scene to pass through — a young granddaughter, Betsey Cranch, joining herself to the church, and a beloved wife dying, to pray for. Weeping children, weeping and mourning parishioners all round him, for every eye streamed, his own heart almost bursting as he spoke. How painful is the recollection, and yet how pleasing!

I know I wound your heart. Why should I? Ought I to give relief to my own by paining yours? Yet

“the grief, that cannot speak,  
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.”

My pen is always freer than my tongue. I have written many things to you that I suppose I never could have talked. My heart is made tender by repeated affliction; it never was a hard heart. The death of Patty came very near me, having lived four years with me under my care. I hope it will make me more continually mindful and watchful of all those who are still committed to my charge. 'Tis a great trust; I daily feel more and more of the weight and import- } ✓

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter of that date.

ance of it, and of my own inability. I wish I could have more of the assistance of my dearest friend, but these perilous times swallow him up.

Mr. Lothrop has given me this account of the demand upon Falmouth. A man-of-war and two tenders went down, and sent to the inhabitants to demand their arms, and require them to stand neuter. They required time to consider; they had until nine o'clock the next day, which time they employed in removing the women, children, and *the rest of their most valuable effects*, out of danger, when they sent their answer in the negative. Upon this, the enemy began a cannonade, and were continuing it when the express came away. Hitchbourne and another gentleman got out of town in a small boat, one of the foggy nights we have had this week. I have not heard what intelligence he brings. Another person says, that Howe enlarged all the prisoners but Lovell, and he would not come out.

I have since seen the Paraphrase,<sup>1</sup> as it is called; but 't is as low as the mock oration,<sup>1</sup> though no reflection upon your private character, further than immoderately whipping your scholars when you kept school; a crime any one will acquit you of who knows you. As a specimen of the wit and humor it contained, I will give you the title. "A Paraphrase upon the Second Epistle of John the Roundhead, to James, the Prolocutor of the Rump Parliament. Dear Devil," &c. I had it, but it was when I was in so much distress that I cared nothing about it. I will mention, when I see you, the foolish conjectures of some, who want always to be finding out something extraordinary in whatever happens.

I hope to hear often from you, which is all the alleviation I have in your absence, and is, next to seeing you, the greatest comfort of your

PORTIA.

<sup>1</sup> Scurrilous publications, made by the Tories and British officers in Boston, during the siege. The first of these was a paraphrase of an intercepted letter of Mr. Adams, to General James Warren, then President of the Provincial Congress.



TO JOHN ADAMS.

5 November, 1775.

I HOPE you have received several letters from me in this fortnight past. I wrote by Mr. Lynch and by Dr. Franklin, the latter of whom I had the pleasure of dining with, and of admiring him, whose character from my infancy I had been taught to venerate. I found him social but not talkative, and, when he spoke, something useful dropped from his tongue. He was grave, yet pleasant and affable. You know I make some pretensions to physiognomy, and I thought I could read in his countenance the virtues of his heart, among which, patriotism shone in its full lustre; and with that is blended every virtue of a Christian. For a true patriot must be a religious man. I have been led to think from a late defection,<sup>1</sup> that he who neglects his duty to his Maker, may well be expected to be deficient and insincere in his duty towards the public. Even suppose him to possess a large share of what is called honor and public spirit, yet, do not these men, by their bad example, by a loose, immoral conduct, corrupt the minds of youth, and vitiate the morals of the age, and thus injure the public more than they can compensate by intrepidity, generosity, and honor? Let revenge or ambition, pride, lust or profit, tempt these men to a base and vile action; you may as well hope to bind up a hungry tiger with a cobweb, as to hold such debauched patriots in the visionary chains of decency, or to charm them with the intellectual beauty of truth and reason.

But where am I running? I mean to thank you for all your obliging favors lately received; and though some of them are very laconic, yet, were they to contain only two lines to tell me that you were well, they would be acceptable to me. I think, however, you are more apprehensive

<sup>1</sup> Of Dr. Church.

than you need be ; the gentleman, to whose care they have always been directed, has been very kind in his conveyance, and very careful. I hope, however, that it will not now be long before we shall have nearer interviews. You must tell me, that you will return next month ; a late appointment<sup>1</sup> will make it inconvenient (provided you accept) for you to go again to Congress.

It seems human nature is the same in all ages and countries. Ambition and avarice reign every where, and, where they predominate, there will be bickerings after places of honor and profit. There is an old adage, "Kissing goes by favor," that is daily verified. I inclose to you the paper you sent for. Your business in collecting facts will be very difficult, and the sufferings of this people cannot be described with pen, ink, and paper. Besides, these ministers of Satan are rendering it every day more and more difficult, by their ravages and devastation, to tell a tale which will freeze the young blood of succeeding generations, as well as harrow up the souls of the present.

Nothing new has transpired since I wrote you last. I have not heard of one person's escape out of town, nor of any manœuvre of any kind.

I will only ask you to measure by your own the affectionate regard of your nearest friend.<sup>2</sup>

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 12 November, 1775. ✓

I RECEIVED yours<sup>3</sup> of 23d October. I want to hear from you every day, and I always feel sorry when I come to the

<sup>1</sup> That of Chief Justice, alluded to in a preceding letter.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is without signature, as was generally the case during the war, when a fictitious one was not attached.

<sup>3</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter of that date.

close of a letter. Your time must be greatly engrossed — but little of it to spare to the calls of private friendship, and I have reason to think I have the largest share of it. Winter makes its approaches fast. I hope I shall not be obliged to spend it without my dearest friend. I know not how to think of it.

The intelligence<sup>1</sup> you will receive before this reaches you, will, I should think, make a plain path, though a dangerous one, for you. I could not join to-day, in the petitions of our worthy pastor, for a reconciliation between our no longer parent state, but tyrant state, and these colonies. Let us separate; they are unworthy to be our brethren. Let us renounce them; and instead of supplications, as formerly, for their prosperity and happiness, let us beseech the Almighty to blast their counsels, and bring to nought all their devices.

I have nothing remarkable to write you. A little skirmish happened last week; the particulars I have endeavoured to collect, but whether I have the facts right, I am not certain. A number of cattle were kept at Lechmere's Point, where two sentinels were placed. In a high tide, it is an island; the regulars had observed this, and a scheme was laid to send a number of them over and take off the stock. Accordingly a number of boats and about four hundred men were sent. They landed, it seems, unperceived by the sentinels, who were asleep; one of whom they killed, and took the other prisoner. As soon as they were perceived, they fired the cannon from Prospect Hill upon them, which sunk one of their boats; but, as the tide was very high, it was difficult getting over, and some time before any alarm was given. A Colonel Thompson, of the riflemen, marched instantly with his men; and, though a very stormy day, they regarded not the tide nor waited for boats, but marched over neck high in water, and discharged their pieces, when

<sup>1</sup> This probably alludes to the act passed by the Provincial Congress on the 10th of the month, to authorize privateering. "The first avowal of offensive hostility against the mother country to be found in the annals of the revolution." Austin's *Life of E. Gerry*, Vol. i. p. 94, and Appendix A.



the regulars ran, without waiting to get off their stock, and made the best of their way to the opposite shore.<sup>1</sup> The General sent his thanks in a public manner to the brave officer and his men. Major Mifflin, I hear, was there, and flew about as though he would have raised the whole army. May they never find us deficient in courage and spirit.

Dr. Franklin invited me to spend the winter in Philadelphia. I shall wish to be there unless you return. I have been like a nun in a cloister, ever since you went away, and have not been into any other house than my father's and sister's, except once to Colonel Quincy's. Indeed, I have had no inclination for company. My evenings are lonesome and melancholy. In the daytime family affairs take off my attention, but the evenings are spent with my departed parent. I then ruminate upon all her care and tenderness, and am sometimes lost and absorbed in a flood of tenderness, ere I am aware of it, or can call to my aid my only prop and support. I must bid you adieu; 't is late at night.

Most affectionately yours.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ 27 November, 1775.

✓ COLONEL WARREN returned last week to Plymouth, so that I shall not hear any thing from you until he goes back again, which will not be till the last of this month. He damped my spirits greatly by telling me, that the Court<sup>2</sup> had prolonged your stay another month. I was pleasing myself with the thought, that you would soon be upon your return. It is in vain to repine. I hope the public will reap what I sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> This affair also is mentioned in "The Remembrancer," for 1776, Vol. i. p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> The General Court of the Province.

I wish I knew what mighty things were fabricating. If a form of government is to be established here, what one will be assumed? Will it be left to our Assemblies to choose one? And will not many men have many minds? And shall we not run into dissensions among ourselves?

I am more and more convinced, that man is a dangerous creature; and that power, whether vested in many or a few, is ever grasping, and, like the grave, cries "Give, give." The great fish swallow up the small; and he, who is most strenuous for the rights of the people, when vested with power is as eager after the prerogatives of government. You tell me of degrees of perfection to which human nature is capable of arriving, and I believe it, but, at the same time, lament that our admiration should arise from the scarcity of the instances.

The building up a great empire, which was only hinted at by my correspondent, may now, I suppose, be realized even by the unbelievers. Yet, will not ten thousand difficulties arise in the formation of it? The reins of government have been so long slackened, that I fear the people will not quietly submit to those restraints, which are necessary for the peace and security of the community. If we separate from Britain, what code of laws will be established? How shall we be governed, so as to retain our liberties? Can any government be free, which is not administered by general stated laws? Who shall frame these laws? Who will give them force and energy? It is true, your resolutions, as a body, have hitherto had the force of laws; but will they continue to have?

When I consider these things, and the prejudices of people in favor of ancient customs and regulations, I feel anxious for the fate of our monarchy or democracy, or whatever is to take place. I soon get lost in a labyrinth of perplexities; but, whatever occurs, may justice and righteousness be the stability of our times, and order arise out of confusion. Great difficulties may be surmounted by patience and perseverance.

I believe I have tired you with politics; as to news we )

have not any at all. I shudder at the approach of winter, when I think I am to remain desolate.

I must bid you good night; 'tis late for me, who am much of an invalid. I was disappointed last week in receiving a packet by the post, and, upon unsealing it, finding only four newspapers. I think you are more cautious than you need be. All letters, I believe, have come safe to hand. I have sixteen from you, and wish I had as many more.

Adieu, yours.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 10 December, 1775.

I RECEIVED your obliging favor by Mrs. Morgan, with the papers and the other articles you sent, which were very acceptable to me, as they are not to be purchased here. I shall be very choice of them.

I have, according to your desire, been upon a visit to Mrs. Morgan, who keeps at Major Mifflin's. I had received a message from Mrs. Mifflin some time ago, desiring I would visit her. My father, who, you know, is very obliging in this way, accompanied me, and I had the pleasure of drinking coffee with the Doctor and his lady, the Major and his lady, and a Mr. and Mrs. Smith from New York, a daughter of the famous son of liberty, Captain Sears; Generals Gates and Lee; a Dr. M'Henry and a Mr. Elwyn, with many others who were strangers to me. I was very politely entertained, and noticed by the generals; more especially General Lee, who was very urgent with me to tarry in town, and dine with him and the ladies present, at Hobgoblin Hall, but I excused myself. The General was determined, that I should not only be acquainted with him, but with his companions too, and therefore placed a chair before me, into which he ordered Mr. Spada to mount and pre-



sent his paw to me for a better acquaintance. I could not do otherwise than accept it. "That, Madam," says he, "is the dog which Mr. —— has rendered famous."

I was so little while in company with these persons, and the company so mixed, that it was almost impossible to form any judgment of them. The Doctor appeared modest, and his lady affable and agreeable. Major Mifflin, you know, I was always an admirer of, as well as of his delicate lady. I believe Philadelphia must be an unfertile soil, or it would not produce so many unfruitful women. I always conceive of these persons as wanting one addition to their happiness; but in these perilous times, I know not, whether it ought to be considered as an infelicity, since they are certainly freed from the anxiety every parent must feel for their rising offspring.

I drank coffee one day with General Sullivan upon Winter Hill. He appears to be a man of sense and spirit. His countenance denotes him of a warm constitution, not to be very suddenly moved, but, when once roused, not very easily lulled, — easy and social, — well calculated for a military station, as he seems to be possessed of those popular qualities, necessary to attach men to him.

By the way, I congratulate you upon our late noble acquisition of military stores.<sup>1</sup> It is a most grand mortar, I assure you. Surely Heaven smiles upon us, in many respects, and we have continually to speak of mercies, as well as of judgments. I wish our gratitude may be anywise proportionate to our benefits. I suppose, in Congress, you think of every thing relative to trade and commerce, as well as other things; but, as I have been desired to mention to you some things, I shall not omit them. One is, that there may be something done, in a Continental way, with regard to excise upon spirituous liquors, that each of the New England colonies may be upon the same footing; whereas we formerly used to pay an excise, and the other colonies none, or very little, by which means they drew away our trade.

<sup>1</sup> By the capture of the brig *Nancy*, bound for Boston, with ordnance from Woolwich.

An excise is necessary, though it may be objected to by the mercantile interest, as a too frequent use of spirits endangers the wellbeing of society. Another article is, that some method may be devised to keep among us our gold and silver, which are now every day shipped off to the West Indies for molasses, coffee, and sugar ; and this I can say of my own knowledge, that a dollar in silver is now become a great rarity, and our traders will give you a hundred pounds of paper for ninety of silver, or nearly that proportion. If any trade is allowed to the West Indies, would it not be better to carry some commodity of our own produce in exchange ? Medicines, cotton wool, and some other articles, we are in great want of. Formerly we used to purchase cotton wool at one shilling, lawful money, per bag ; now it is three, and the scarcity of that article distresses us, as it was wrought up with less trouble than any other article of clothing. Flax is now from a shilling to one and sixpence per pound, sheep's wool eighteen pence, and linens not to be had at any price. I cannot mention the article in the English goods way, which is not double ; and, in the West India, molasses by retail I used formerly to purchase at one and eight pence, — now it is two and eight pence ; rum, three shillings ; coffee, one and three pence, and all other things in proportion. Corn is four shillings per bushel ; rye, five ; oats, three and eight pence ; hay, five and six shillings per hundred ; wood, twenty shillings per cord ; but meat of all kinds cheap.

My uncle Quincy desires to be remembered to you ; he inquired when you talked of coming home. I told him you had not fixed any time. He says, if you don't come soon, he would advise me to procure another husband. He,<sup>1</sup> of all persons, ought not to give me such advice, I told him, unless he set a better example himself.

Be kind enough to burn this letter. It is written in great

<sup>1</sup> Norton Quincy, the only son of Colonel John Quincy, and the uncle of Mrs. Adams, was married early. His wife died within the first year of the marriage, and the depth of his feelings at this bereavement was such as to make him a recluse for life. Hence the point of her remark.

haste, and a most incorrect scrawl it is. But I cannot conclude without telling you, we are all very angry with your House of Assembly for their instructions.<sup>1</sup> They raise prejudices in the minds of people, and serve to create in their minds a terror at a separation from a people wholly unworthy of us. We are a little of the spaniel kind ; though so often spurned, still to fawn, argues a meanness of spirit, that, as an individual, I disclaim, and would rather endure any hardship than submit to it.

Yours.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Saturday Evening, 2 March, 1776. ✓

I WAS greatly rejoiced, at the return of your servant, to find you had safely arrived, and that you were well. I had never heard a word from you after you had left New York, and a most ridiculous story had been industriously propagated in this and the neighbouring towns to injure the cause and blast your reputation ; namely, that you and your President<sup>2</sup> had gone on board of a man-of-war from New York, and sailed for England. I should not mention so idle a report, but that it had given uneasiness to some of your friends ; not that they, in the least, credited the report, but because the gaping vulgar swallowed the story. One man<sup>3</sup> had deserted them and proved a traitor, another might, &c. I assure you, such high disputes took place in the public house of this parish, that some men were collared and dragged out of the shop with great threats, for reporting such scandalous lies, and an uncle of ours offered his life as a forfeit for you, if the

<sup>1</sup> It is a little doubtful to what this alludes. Probably to the application made by New Hampshire to Congress, for advice to establish a form of government for itself. This advice was given, although not without reluctance. A number of the members opposed it, as being too decisive a step towards independence. — See Gordon's "History," Vol. ii. p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> John Hancock.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Church.



report proved true. However, it has been a nine days' marvel, and will now cease. I heartily wish every Tory was extirpated from America; they are continually, by secret means, undermining and injuring our cause.

I am charmed with the sentiments of "Common Sense," and wonder how an honest heart, one who wishes the welfare of his country and the happiness of posterity, can hesitate one moment at adopting them. I want to know how these sentiments are received in Congress. I dare say there would be no difficulty in procuring a vote and instructions from all the Assemblies in New England for Independence. I most sincerely wish, that now, in the lucky moment, it might be done.

I have been kept in a continual state of anxiety and expectation, ever since you left me. It has been said "to-morrow" and "to-morrow," for this month, but when the dreadful to-morrow will be, I know not. But hark! The house this instant shakes with the roar of cannon. I have been to the door, and find it is a cannonade from our army. Orders, I find, are come, for all the remaining militia to repair to the lines Monday night by twelve o'clock. No sleep for me to-night. And if I cannot, who have no guilt upon my soul with regard to this cause, how shall the miserable wretches, who have been the procurers of this dreadful scene, and those who are to be the actors, lie down with the load of guilt upon their souls?

Sunday Evening, 3 March.

I went to bed after twelve, but got no rest; the cannon continued firing, and my heart beat pace with them all night. We have had a pretty quiet day, but what to-morrow will bring forth, God only knows.

Monday Evening.

Tolerably quiet. To-day the militia have all mustered, with three days' provision, and are all marched by three o'clock this afternoon, though their notice was no longer ago than eight o'clock, Saturday. And now we have

scarcely a man, but our regular guards, either in Weymouth, Hingham, Braintree, or Milton, and the militia from the more remote towns are called in as seacoast guards. Can you form to yourself an idea of our sensations?

I have just returned from Penn's Hill, where I have been sitting to hear the amazing roar of cannon, and from whence I could see every shell which was thrown. The sound, I think, is one of the grandest in nature, and is of the true species of the sublime. 'Tis now an incessant roar; but O! the fatal ideas, which are connected with the sound! How many of our dear countrymen must fall!

Tuesday Morning.

I went to bed about twelve, and rose again a little after one. I could no more sleep, than if I had been in the engagement; the rattling of the windows, the jar of the house, the continual roar of twenty-four pounders, and the bursting of shells, give us such ideas, and realize a scene to us of which we could form scarcely any conception. About six, this morning, there was quiet. I rejoiced in a few hours' calm. I hear we got possession of Dorchester Hill last night; four thousand men upon it to-day; lost but one man. The ships are all drawn round the town. To-night we shall realize a more terrible scene still. I sometimes think I cannot stand it. I wish myself with you, out of hearing, as I cannot assist them. I hope to give you joy of Boston, even if it is in ruins, before I send this away. I am too much agitated to write as I ought, and languid for want of rest.

Thursday. Fast-day.

All my anxiety and distress is at present at an end. I feel disappointed. This day our militia are all returning, without effecting any thing more than taking possession of Dorchester Hill. I hope it is wise and just, but, from all the muster and stir, I hoped and expected more important and decisive scenes. I would not have suffered all I have for two such hills. Ever since the taking of that, we have

had a perfect calm : nor can I learn yet, what effect it has had in Boston. I do not hear of one person's escaping since.

I was very much pleased with your choice of a committee for Canada. All those to whom I have ventured to show that part of your letter,<sup>1</sup> approve the scheme of the priest, as a master stroke of policy. I feel sorry that General Lee has left us, but his presence at New York was no doubt of great importance, as we have reason to think it prevented Clinton from landing and gathering together such a nest of vermin, as would at least have distressed us greatly. But how can you spare him from here ? Can you make his place good ? Can you supply it with a man equally qualified to save us ? How do the Virginians relish the troops said to be destined for them ? Are they putting themselves into a state of defence ? I inclose to you a copy of a letter sent by Captain Furnance, who is in Mr. Ned Church's employ, and who came into the Cape about ten days ago. You will learn the sentiments of our cousin by it. Some of which may be true, but I hope he is a much better divine than politician. I hear that in one of his letters, he mentions certain intercepted letters<sup>2</sup> which he says have made much noise in England, and laments that you ever wrote them. I cannot bear to think of your continuing in a state of supineness this winter.

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat ;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.”

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter, 18 February, 1776. The members chosen on the committee, were Dr. Franklin, Mr. Samuel Chase, and Mr. Charles Carroll, of Carrollton. At the same time it was “ Resolved, That Mr. Carroll be requested to prevail on Mr. John Carroll to accompany the committee to Canada, to assist them in such matters as they shall think useful.” — *Journal of Congress*, February 15th, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> Some account of these letters, which are several times alluded to in this correspondence, will be found in the Appendix to the first volume of the letters of Mr. Adams.



Sunday Evening, 10 March.

I had scarcely finished these lines when my ears were again assaulted by the roar of cannon. I could not write any further. My hand and heart will tremble at this "domestic fury and fierce civil strife," which "cumber all" our "parts;" though "blood and destruction" are "so much in use," "and dreadful objects so familiar," yet is not "pity choked," nor my heart grown callous. I feel for the unhappy wretches, who know not where to fly for safety. I feel still more for my bleeding countrymen, who are hazarding their lives and their limbs. A most terrible and incessant cannonade from half after eight till six this morning. I hear we lost four men killed, and some wounded, in attempting to take the hill nearest the town, called Nook's Hill. We did some work, but the fire from the ships beat off our men, so that they did not secure it, but retired to the fort upon the other hill.

I have not got all the particulars; I wish I had; but, as I have an opportunity of sending this, I shall endeavour to be more particular in my next.

If there are reinforcements here, I believe we shall be driven from the seacoast; but, in whatever state I am, I will endeavour to be therewith content.

"Man wants but little here below,  
Nor wants that little long."

You will excuse this very incorrect letter. You see in what perturbation it has been written, and how many times I have left off. Adieu. Yours.

P. S. Took's grammar is the one you mention.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 7 April, 1776.

I HAVE received two letters from you this week. One of the 17th, and the other the 19th of March.<sup>1</sup> I believe I have

<sup>1</sup> See both these letters among those of Mr. Adams.

received all your letters except one you mention writing from Framingham, which I never heard of before. I have received all the papers you have sent, the oration and the magazines. In the small papers I sometimes find pieces begun and continued, (for instance, Johnston's speech,) but am so unlucky as not to get the papers in order, and miss of seeing the whole.

The removal of the army seems to have stopped the current of news. I want to know to what part of America they are now wandering. It is reported and credited, that Manly has taken a schooner belonging to the fleet, richly laden with money, plate, and English goods, with a number of Tories. The particulars I have not yet learned. Yesterday the remains of our worthy General Warren were dug up upon Bunker's hill, and carried into town, and on Monday are to be interred with all the honors of war.

10 April.

The Doctor was buried on Monday; the masons walking in procession from the Statehouse, with the military in uniforms, and a large concourse of people attending. He was carried into the Chapel, and there a funeral dirge was played, an excellent prayer by Dr. Cooper, and an oration by Mr. Morton, which I hope will be printed. I think the subject must have inspired him. A young fellow could not have wished a finer opportunity to display his talents. The amiable and heroic virtues of the deceased, recent in the minds of the audience; the noble cause to which he fell a martyr; their own sufferings and unparalleled injuries, all fresh in their minds, must have given weight and energy to whatever could be delivered upon the occasion. The dead body, like that of Cæsar, before their eyes, whilst each wound,

“like dumb mouths, did ope their ruby lips,  
To beg the voice and utterance of a tongue.  
Woe to the hands that shed this costly blood,  
A curse shall light ” upon their line.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The quotations from Shakspeare's "Julius Cæsar," so frequently to be met with in this and the preceding letter, betray as strongly the historical

11 April.

I take my pen and write just as I can get time ; my letters will be a strange mixture. I really am "cumbered about many things," and scarcely know which way to turn myself. I miss my partner, and find myself unequal to the cares which fall upon me. I find it necessary to be the directress of our husbandry. I hope in time to have the reputation of being as good a *farmeress*, as my partner has of being a good statesman. To ask you any thing about your return, would, I suppose, be asking a question which you cannot answer.

Retirement, rural quiet, domestic pleasures, all, all, must give place to the weighty cares of state. It would be

"meanly poor in solitude to hide  
An honest zeal, unwarped by party rage."

"Though certain pains attend the cares of state,  
A good man owes his country to be great,  
Should act abroad the high distinguished part,  
And show, at least, the purpose of his heart."

I hope your Prussian general<sup>1</sup> will answer the high character which is given of him. But we, who have been bred in a land of liberty, scarcely know how to give credit to so unjust and arbitrary a mandate of a despot. To cast off a faithful servant only for being the unhappy bearer of ill news, degrades the man, and dishonors the prince. The Congress, by employing him, have shown a liberality of sentiment, not confined to colonies or continents, but, to use the words of "Common Sense," have "carried their friendship on a larger scale, by claiming brotherhood with every European Christian, and may justly triumph in the generosity of the sentiment."

precedents to which the mind of the writer at this time inclined, as the signature which she assumed.

The Baron de Woedtke, who was appointed by Congress a brigadier general on the 16th of March, and ordered to Canada. He died shortly afterwards, at Lake George. — See Sparks's edition of "Washington's Writings," Vol. iv. p. 6, *note*. See also the letter to which this is an answer.



Yesterday, was taken and carried into Cohasset, by three whaleboats, who went from the shore on purpose, a snow from the Grenadas, laden with three hundred and fifty-four puncheons of West India rum, forty-three barrels of sugar, twelve thousand and five hundred weight of coffee ; a valuable prize. A number of Eastern sloops have brought wood into town since the fleet sailed. We have a rumor of Admiral Hopkins being engaged with a number of ships and tenders off Rhode Island ; and are anxious to know the event.

Be so good as to send me a list of the vessels which sail with Hopkins, their names, weight of metal, and number of men ; all the news you know, &c.

I hear our jurors refuse to serve, because the writs are issued in the King's name. Surely, they are for independence.

Write me how you do this winter. I want to say many things I must omit. It is not fit "to wake the soul by tender strokes of art," or to ruminate upon happiness we might enjoy, lest absence become intolerable.

Adieu.

Yours.

I wish you would burn all my letters.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 7 May, 1776.

How many are the solitary hours I spend, ruminating upon the past, and anticipating the future, whilst you, overwhelmed with the cares of state, have but a few moments you can devote to any individual. All domestic pleasures and enjoyments are absorbed in the great and important duty you owe your country, "for our country is, as it were, a secondary god, and the first and greatest parent. It is to be preferred to parents, wives, children, friends, and all things, the gods only excepted ; for, if our country perishes, it is as impos-

sible to save an individual, as to preserve one of the fingers of a mortified hand." Thus do I suppress every wish, and silence every murmur, acquiescing in a painful separation from the companion of my youth, and the friend of my heart.

I believe 't is near ten days since I wrote you a line. I have not felt in a humor to entertain you. If I had taken up my pen perhaps some unbecoming invective might have fallen from it. The eyes of our rulers have been closed, and a lethargy has seized almost every member. I fear a fatal security has taken possession of them. Whilst the building is in flames, they tremble at the expense of water to quench it. In short, two months have elapsed since the evacuation of Boston, and very little has been done in that time to secure it, or the harbour, from future invasion. The people are all in a flame, and no one among us, that I have heard of, even mentions expense. They think, universally, that there has been an amazing neglect somewhere. Many have turned out as volunteers to work upon Noddle's Island, and many more would go upon Nantasket, if the business was once set on foot. " 'Tis a maxim of state, that power and liberty are like heat and moisture. Where they are well mixed, every thing prospers ; where they are single, they are destructive."

A government of more stability is much wanted in this colony, and they are ready to receive it from the hands of the Congress. And since I have begun with maxims of state, I will add another, namely, that a people may let a king fall, yet still remain a people ; but, if a king let his people slip from him, he is no longer a king. And as this is most certainly our case, why not proclaim to the world, in decisive terms, your own importance ?

Shall we not be despised by foreign powers, for hesitating so long at a word ?

I cannot say, that I think you are very generous to the ladies ; for, whilst you are proclaiming peace and good-will to men, emancipating all nations, you insist upon retaining an absolute power over wives. But you must remember,

that arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken ; and, notwithstanding all your wise laws and maxims, we have it in our power, not only to free ourselves, but to subdue our masters, and, without violence, throw both your natural and legal authority at our feet ; —

“ Charm by accepting, by submitting sway,  
Yet have our humor most when we obey.”

I thank you for several letters which I have received since I wrote last ; they alleviate a tedious absence, and I long earnestly for a Saturday evening, and experience a similar pleasure to that which I used to find in the return of my friend upon that day after a week’s absence. The idea of a year dissolves all my philosophy.

Our little ones, whom you so often recommend to my care and instruction, shall not be deficient in virtue or probity, if the precepts of a mother have their desired effect ; but they would be doubly enforced, could they be indulged with the example of a father alternately before them. I often point them to their sire,

“ engaged in a corrupted state,  
Wrestling with vice and faction.”

9 May.

I designed to have finished the sheet, but, an opportunity offering, I close, only just informing you that, May the 7th, our privateers took two prizes in the bay, in fair sight of the man-of-war ; one, a brig from Ireland ; the other from Fayal, loaded with wine, brandy, &c. ; the other with beef, &c. The wind was east, and a flood tide, so that the tenders could not get out, though they tried several times ; the lighthouse fired signal guns, but all would not do. They took them in triumph, and carried them into Lynn.

Pray be kind enough to remember me at all times, and write, as often as you possibly can, to your

PORTIA.



TO JOHN ADAMS.

Plymouth, 17 June, 1776, a remarkable day.

I THIS day received by the hands of our worthy friend, a large packet, which has refreshed and comforted me. Your own sensations have ever been similar to mine. I need not then tell you how gratified I am at the frequent tokens of remembrance with which you favor me, nor how they rouse every tender sensation of my soul, which sometimes will find vent at my eyes. Nor dare I describe how earnestly I long to fold to my fluttering heart the object of my warmest affections; the idea soothes me. I feast upon it with a pleasure known only to those whose hearts and hopes are one.

The approbation you give to my conduct in the management of our private affairs, is very grateful to me, and sufficiently compensates for all my anxieties and endeavours to discharge the many duties devolved upon me in consequence of the absence of my dearest friend. Were they discharged according to my wishes, I should merit the praises you bestow.

You see I date from Plymouth. I came upon a visit to our amiable friends, accompanied by my sister Betsey, a day or two ago. It is the first night I have been absent since you left me. Having determined upon this visit for some time, I put my family in order and prepared for it, thinking I might leave it with safety. Yet, the day I set out, I was under many apprehensions, by the coming in of ten transports, who were seen to have many soldiers on board, and the determination of the people to go and fortify upon Long Island, Pettick's Island, Nantasket, and Great Hill. It was apprehended they would attempt to land somewhere, but the next morning I had the pleasure to hear they were all driven out, Commodore and all; not a transport, a ship, or a tender to be seen. This shows what might have been long ago done. Had this been done in season, the ten

transports, with many others, in all probability would have fallen into our hands ; but the progress of wisdom is slow.

Since I arrived here I have really had a scene quite novel to me. The brig *Defence*, from Connecticut, put in here for ballast. The officers, who are all from thence, and who are intimately acquainted at Dr. Lothrop's, invited his lady to come on board, and bring with her as many of her friends as she could collect. She sent an invitation to our friend, Mrs. Warren, and to us. The brig lay about a mile and a half from town. The officers sent their barge, and we went. Every mark of respect and attention which was in their power, they showed us. She is a fine brig, mounts sixteen guns, twelve swivels, and carries one hundred and twenty men. A hundred and seventeen were on board, and no private family ever appeared under better regulation than the crew. It was as still as though there had been only half a dozen ; not a profane word among any of them. The captain himself is an exemplary man ; (Harden his name) has been in nine sea engagements ; says if he gets a man who swears, and finds he cannot reform him, he turns him on shore, yet is free to confess, that it was the sin of his youth. He has one lieutenant, a very fine fellow, Smelden by name. We spent a very agreeable afternoon, and drank tea on board. They showed us their arms, which were sent by Queen Anne, and every thing on board was a curiosity to me. They gave us a mock engagement with an enemy, and the manner of taking a ship. The young folks went upon the quarter deck and danced. Some of their Jacks played very well upon the violin and German flute. The brig bears the Continental colors, and was fitted out by the Colony of Connecticut. As we set off from the brig, they fired their guns in honor of us, a ceremony I would very readily have dispensed with.

I pity you, and feel for you under all the difficulties you have to encounter. My daily petitions to Heaven for you are, that you may have health, wisdom, and fortitude suffi-

cient to carry you through the great and arduous business in which you are engaged, and that your endeavours may be crowned with success. Canada seems a dangerous and ill-fated place. It is reported here, that General Thomas is no more, that he took the smallpox, and died with it. Every day some circumstance arises, which shows me the importance of having the distemper in youth. Dr. Bulfinch has petitioned the General Court for leave to open a hospital somewhere, and it will be granted him. I shall, with all the children, be one of the first class, you may depend upon it.

I have just this moment heard, that the brig, which I was on board of on Saturday, and which sailed yesterday morning from this place, fell in with two transports, having each of them a hundred and fifty men on board, and took them, and has brought them into Nantasket Roads, under cover of the guns which are mounted there. I will add further particulars as soon as I am informed.

I am now better informed, and will give you the truth. The brig *Defence*, accompanied by a small privateer, sailed in concert Sunday morning. About twelve o'clock they discovered two transports, and made for them. Two privateers, which were small, had been in chase of them, but finding the enemy was of much larger force, had run under Cohasset rocks. The *Defence* gave a signal gun to bring them out. Captain Burk, who accompanied the *Defence*, being a prime sailer, he came up first, and poured a broadside on board a sixteen gun brig. The *Defence* soon attacked her upon her bows. An obstinate engagement ensued. There was a continual blaze upon all sides for many hours, and it was near midnight before they struck. In the engagement, the *Defence* lost one man, and five wounded. With Burk, not one man received any damage; on board the enemy, fourteen killed, among whom was a major, and sixty wounded. They are part of the Highland soldiers. The other transport mounted six guns. When the fleet sailed out of this harbor last week, they blew up the lighthouse. They met six transports coming in, which they



carried off with them. I hope we shall soon be in such a posture of defence, as to bid them defiance.

I feel no great anxiety at the large armament designed against us. The remarkable interpositions of Heaven in our favor cannot be too gratefully acknowledged. He who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, "who clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the young ravens when they cry," will not forsake a people engaged in so righteous a cause, if we remember his loving-kindness. We wanted powder,—we have a supply. We wanted arms,—we have been favored in that respect. We wanted hard money,—twenty-two thousand dollars, and an equal value in plate, are delivered into our hands.

You mention your peas, your cherries, and your strawberries, &c. Ours are but just in blossom. We have had (the coldest spring I ever knew. Things are three weeks behind what they generally used to be. The corn looks poor. (The season now is rather dry. I believe I did not understand you, when in a former letter<sup>1</sup> you said, "I want to resign my office, for a thousand reasons." If you mean that of judge, I know not what to say. I know it will be a (difficult and arduous station; but, divesting myself of private interest, which would lead me to be against your holding (that office, I know of no person who is so well calculated to discharge the trust, or who I think would act a more (conscientious part.

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TO MRS. WARREN.<sup>2</sup>

DEAR MARCIA.

MR. MORTON has given me great pleasure this morning by acquainting me with the appointment of our worthy friend

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter, dated 12 May, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is without date. James Warren was appointed in 1776 one of the Judges of the Superior Court of Massachusetts, and not long after John Adams had been made Chief Justice. They both declined the

to the Bench. Have I any influence with him? If I have I beg he would accept. I know very well what he will say; but he has long been accustomed to Courts, and the office he held led him to some acquaintance with law, and his own abilities will easily qualify him to fill the place with dignity. If he refuses, it will bring a contempt upon the place.—To have those offices bandied about from hand to hand may give the world just occasion to say that they are not considered of any importance. I know the service of his country is his chief aim; and he who is upon principle desirous of it cannot fail of the important end. I need not add how much pleasure it will give to my particular friend and to your

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

29 September, 1776.

NOT since the 6th of September,<sup>1</sup> have I had one line from you, which makes me very uneasy. Are you all this time conferring with his Lordship? Is there no communication? or, are the post-riders all dismissed? Let the cause be what it will, not hearing from you has given me much uneasiness.

We seem to be kept in total ignorance of affairs at York. I hope you at Congress are more enlightened. Who fell, who are wounded, who prisoners or their number, is as undetermined as it was the day after the battle.<sup>2</sup> If our army is in ever so critical a state I wish to know it, and the worst

posts. Of General Warren, the originator of the system of Corresponding Committees of the Revolution, and for a long time prominent in the political history of Massachusetts, it is to be regretted that the memory should be suffered to decay.

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter of that date. Dr. Franklin, Mr. John Adams, and Mr. Rutledge, were elected a Committee on the part of Congress, to confer with Lord Howe, respecting his powers to treat.—*Journals of Congress*, September 6th, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> On Long Island.

of it. If all America is to be ruined and undone by a pack of cowards and knaves, I wish to know it. Pitiab!e is the lot of their commander. Cæsar's tenth legion never was forgiven. We are told for truth, that a regiment of Yorkers refused to quit the city; and, that another regiment behaved like a pack of cowardly villains by quitting their posts. If they are unjustly censured, it is for want of proper intelligence.

I am sorry to see a spirit so venal prevailing everywhere. When our men were drawn out for Canada, a very large bounty was given them; and now another call is made upon us; no one will go without a large bounty, though only for two months, and each town seems to think its honor engaged in outbidding the others. The province pay is forty shillings. In addition to that, this town voted to make it up six pounds. They then drew out the persons most unlikely to go, and they are obliged to give three pounds to hire a man. Some pay the whole fine, ten pounds. Forty men are now drafted from this town. More than one half, from sixteen to fifty, are now in the service. This method of conducting will create a general uneasiness in the Continental army. I hardly think you can be sensible how much we are thinned in this province.

The rage for privateering is as great here as anywhere. Vast numbers are employed in that way. If it is necessary to make any more drafts upon us, the women must reap the harvests. I am willing to do my part. I believe I could gather corn, and husk it; but I should make a poor figure at digging potatoes.

There has been a report, that a fleet was seen in our bay yesterday. I cannot conceive from whence, nor do I believe the story.

'T is said you have been upon Staten Island to hold your conference. 'T is a little odd, that I have never received the least intimation of it from you. Did you think I should be alarmed? Don't you know me better than to think me a coward? I hope you will write me every thing concerning this affair. I have a great curiosity to know the result.



As to government, nothing is yet done about it. The Church is opened here every Sunday, and the King prayed for, as usual, in open defiance of Congress.

If the next post does not bring me a letter, I think I will leave off writing, for I shall not believe you get mine.

Adieu. Yours, ———.

P. S. Master John has become post-rider from Boston to Braintree.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

30 July, 1777.

I DARE say, before this time, you have interpreted the Northern Storm. If the presages chilled your blood, how must you be frozen and stiffened at the disgrace brought upon our arms!<sup>1</sup> unless some warmer passion seize you, and anger and resentment fire your breast. How are all our vast magazines of cannon, powder, arms, clothing, provision, medicine, &c., to be restored to us? But, what is vastly more, how shall the disgrace be wiped away? How shall our lost honor be retrieved? The reports with regard to that fortress are very vague and uncertain. Some write from thence, that there was not force sufficient to defend it. Others say it might have stood a long siege. Some there are, who ought to know why and wherefore we have given away a place of such importance.

That the inquiry will be made, I make no doubt; and, if cowardice, guilt, deceit, are found upon any one, howsoever high or exalted his station, may shame, reproach, infamy, hatred, and the execrations of the public, be his portion.

I would not be so narrow-minded, as to suppose, that

<sup>1</sup> The evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, by General St. Clair.

there are not many men of all nations, possessed of honor, virtue, and integrity; yet, it is to be lamented, that we have not men among ourselves, sufficiently qualified for war, to take upon them the most important command.

It was customary among the Carthaginians, to have a military school, in which the flower of their nobility, and those whose talents and ambition prompted them to aspire to the first dignities, learned the art of war. From among these, they selected all their general officers; for, though they employed mercenary soldiers, they were too jealous and suspicious to employ foreign generals. Will a foreigner, whose interest is not naturally connected with ours (any otherwise than as the cause of liberty is the cause of all mankind), will he act with the same zeal, or expose himself to equal dangers, with the same resolution, for a republic of which he is not a member, as he would have done for his own native country? And can the people repose an equal confidence in them, even supposing them men of integrity and abilities, and that they meet with success equal to their abilities? How much envy and malice are employed against them! And how galling to pride, how mortifying to human nature, to see itself excelled.

31 July.

I have nothing new to entertain you with, unless it is an account of a new set of mobility, which has lately taken the lead in Boston. You must know that there is a great scarcity of sugar and coffee, articles which the female part of the state is very loth to give up, especially whilst they consider the scarcity occasioned by the merchants having secreted a large quantity. There had been much rout and noise in the town for several weeks. Some stores had been opened by a number of people, and the coffee and sugar carried into the market, and dealt out by pounds. It was rumored that an eminent, wealthy, stingy merchant<sup>1</sup> (who

<sup>1</sup> Said to have been Thomas Boylston, who afterwards left this country and settled in London.

is a bachelor) had a hogshead of coffee in his store, which he refused to sell to the committee under six shillings per pound. A number of females, some say a hundred, some say more, assembled with a cart and trucks, marched down to the warehouse, and demanded the keys, which he refused to deliver. Upon which, one of them seized him by his neck, and tossed him into the cart. Upon his finding no quarter, he delivered the keys, when they tipped up the cart and discharged him; then opened the warehouse, hoisted out the coffee themselves, put it into the truck, and drove off.

It was reported, that he had personal chastisement among them; but this, I believe was not true. A large concourse of men stood amazed, silent spectators of the whole transaction.

Adieu. Your good mother is just come; she desires to be remembered to you; so do my father and sister, who have just left me, and so does she, whose greatest happiness consists in being tenderly beloved by her absent friend, and who subscribes herself ever his

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

5 August, 1777. ✓

IF alarming half a dozen places at the same time is an act of generalship, Howe may boast of his late conduct. We have never, since the evacuation of Boston, been under apprehensions of an invasion, equal to what we suffered last week. All Boston was in confusion, packing up and carting out of town household furniture, military stores, goods, &c. Not less than a thousand teams were employed on Friday and Saturday; and, to their shame be it told, not a small trunk would they carry under eight dollars, and many of them, I am told, asked a hundred dollars a load; for carting a hogshead of molasses eight miles, thirty



dollars. O human nature ! or rather, O inhuman nature ! what art thou ? The report of the fleet's being seen off Cape Ann Friday night gave me the alarm, and, though pretty weak, I set about packing up my things, and on Saturday removed a load.

When I looked around me and beheld the bounties of Heaven so liberally bestowed, in fine fields of corn, grass, flax, and English grain, and thought it might soon become a prey to these merciless ravagers, our habitations laid waste, and if our flight preserved our lives, we must return to barren fields, empty barns, and desolate habitations, if any we find, (perhaps not where to lay our heads,) my heart was too full to bear the weight of affliction which I thought just ready to overtake us, and my body too weak almost to bear the shock, unsupported by my better half.

But thanks be to Heaven, we are at present relieved from our fears respecting ourselves. I now feel anxious for your safety, but hope prudence will direct to a proper care and attention to yourselves. May this second attempt of Howe's prove his utter ruin. May destruction overtake him as a whirlwind.

We have a report of an engagement at the northward, in which our troops behaved well, drove the enemy into their lines, killed and took three hundred and fifty prisoners. The account came in last night. I have not particulars. We are under apprehensions that the *Hancock* is taken.

✓ Your obliging letters<sup>1</sup> of the 8th, 10th, and 13th, came to hand last week. I hope before this time you are relieved from the anxiety you express for your bosom friend. I feel my sufferings amply rewarded, in the tenderness you express for me. But, in one of your letters, you have drawn a picture which drew a flood of tears from my eyes, and wrung my heart with anguish inexpressible. I pray Heaven, ✓ I may not live to realize it.

It is almost thirteen years since we were united, but not more than half that time have we had the happiness of liv-

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letters of the 8th and 13th July, 1777. The first of these is the one particularly alluded to.

ing together. The unfeeling world may consider it in what light they please. I consider it as a sacrifice to my country, and one of my greatest misfortunes, to be separated from my children, at a time of life when the joint instructions and admonition of parents sink deeper than in maturer years.

The hope of the smiles and approbation of my friend sweetens all my toils and labors.

“Ye Powers, whom men and birds obey,  
Great rulers of your creatures, say  
Why mourning comes, by bliss conveyed,  
And even the sweets of love allayed.  
Where grows enjoyment tall and fair,  
Around it twines entangling care;  
While fear for what our sons possess  
Enervates every power to bless.  
Yet friendship forms the bliss above,  
And, life, what art thou without love?”

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

17 September, 1777.

I HAVE to acknowledge a feast of letters from you since I wrote last; their dates<sup>1</sup> from August 19th to September 1st. It is a very great satisfaction to me to know from day to day the movement of Howe and his banditti. We live in hourly expectation of important intelligence from both armies. Heaven grant us victory and peace; two blessings, I fear, we are very undeserving of.

Enclosed you will find a letter to Mr. Lovell,<sup>2</sup> who was so obliging as to send me a plan of that part of the country, which is like to be the present seat of war. He accompanied it with a very polite letter, and I esteem myself much

<sup>1</sup> See twelve letters, written between these dates, among those by Mr. Adams.

<sup>2</sup> James Lovell; at this time, and for several years after, a delegate from Massachusetts to the General Congress.

obliged to him ; but there is no reward this side the grave that would be a temptation to me to undergo the agitation and distress I was thrown into by receiving a letter in his handwriting, franked by him. It seems almost impossible, that the human mind could take in, in so small a space of time, so many ideas as rushed upon mine in the space of a moment. I cannot describe to you what I felt.

The sickness or death of the dearest of friends, with ten thousand horrors, seized my imagination. I took up the letter, then laid it down, then gave it out of my hand unable to open it, then collected resolution enough to unseal it, but dared not read it ; began at the bottom, — read a line, — then attempted to begin it, but could not. A paper was enclosed, I ventured upon that, and, finding it a plan, recovered enough to read the letter ; but I pray heaven, I may never realize such another moment of distress.

I designed to have written you a long letter, for really I owe you one, but have been prevented by our worthy Plymouth friends, who are here upon a visit, in their way home ; and it is now so late at night, just struck twelve, that I will defer any thing further till the next post. Good night, friend of my heart, companion of my youth, husband, and lover. Angels watch thy repose !

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Boston, 25 October, 1777.

✓ THE joyful news of the surrender of General Burgoyne and all his army, to our victorious troops, prompted me to take a ride this afternoon with my daughter to town, to join, to-morrow, with my friends in thanksgiving and praise to the Supreme Being, who hath so remarkably delivered our enemies into our hands. And, hearing that an express is to go off to-morrow morning, I have retired to write you a few lines. I have received no letters from you since you left



Philadelphia<sup>1</sup> by the post, and but one by any private hand. I have written you once before this. Do not fail of writing by the return of this express, and direct your letters to the care of my uncle, who has been a kind and faithful hand to me through the whole season, and a constant attendant upon the post-office.

Burgoyne is expected in by the middle of the week. I have read many articles of capitulation, but none which ever before contained so generous terms. Many people find fault with them, but perhaps do not consider sufficiently the circumstances of General Gates, who, by delaying and exacting more, might have lost all. This must be said of him, that he has followed the golden rule, and done as he would wish himself, in like circumstances, to be dealt with. Must not the vamping Burgoyne, who, it is said, possesses great sensibility, be humbled to the dust? He may now write the Blockade of Saratoga. I have heard it proposed, that he should take up his quarters in the Old South, but believe he will not be permitted to come to this town. Heaven grant us success at the southward. That saying of Poor Richard often occurs to my mind, "God helps them who help themselves;" but, if men turn their backs and run from an enemy, they cannot surely expect to conquer him.

This day, dearest of friends, completes thirteen years since we were solemnly united in wedlock. Three years of this time we have been cruelly separated. I have, patiently as I could, endured it, with the belief that you were serving your country, and rendering your fellow creatures essential benefits. May future generations rise up and call you blessed, and the present behave worthy of the blessings you are laboring to secure to them, and I shall have less reason to regret the deprivation of my own particular felicity.

Adieu, dearest of friends, adieu.

<sup>1</sup> For Yorktown, whither the Congress had adjourned.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

8 March, 1778.

'T IS a little more than three weeks since the dearest of friends and tenderest of husbands left<sup>1</sup> his solitary partner, and quitted all the fond endearments of domestic felicity for the dangers of the sea, exposed, perhaps, to the attack of a hostile foe, and, O good Heaven! can I add, to the dark assassin, to the secret murderer, and the bloody emissary of as cruel a tyrant as God, in his righteous judgments, ever suffered to disgrace the throne of Britain.

I have travelled with you over the wide Atlantic, and could have landed you safe, with humble confidence, at your desired haven, and then have set myself down to enjoy a negative kind of happiness, in the painful part which it has pleased Heaven to allot me; but the intelligence with regard to that great philosopher, able statesman, and unshaken friend of his country,<sup>2</sup> has planted a dagger in my breast, and I feel, with a double edge, the weapon that pierced the bosom of a Franklin.

“For nought avail the virtues of the heart,  
Nor towering genius claims its due reward;  
From Britain's fury, as from death's keen dart,  
No worth can save us, and no fame can guard.”

The more distinguished the person, the greater the inveteracy of these foes of human nature. The argument of my friends to alleviate my anxiety, by persuading me that this shocking attempt will put you more upon your guard and render your person more secure than if it had never taken place, is kind in them, and has some weight; but my greatest comfort and consolation arise from the belief of a superintending Providence, to whom I can, with confidence,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams, with his eldest son, sailed for France in the frigate Boston in February of this year.

<sup>2</sup> An unfounded rumor of the assassination of Dr. Franklin in Paris.

commit you, since not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Were it not for this, I should be miserable and overwhelmed by my fears and apprehensions.

Freedom of sentiment, the life and soul of friendship, is in a great measure cut off by the danger of miscarriage, and the apprehension of letters falling into the hands of our enemies. Should this meet with that fate, may they blush for their connection with a nation who have rendered themselves infamous and abhorred, by a long list of crimes, which not their high achievements, nor the lustre of former deeds, nor the tender appellation of parent, nor the fond connexion which once subsisted, can ever blot from our remembrance, nor wipe out those indelible stains of their cruelty and baseness. They have engraven them with a pen of iron on a rock for ever.

To my dear son remember me in the most affectionate terms. I would have written to him, but my notice is so short that I have not time. Enjoin it upon him never to disgrace his mother, and to behave worthily of his father. Tender as maternal affection is, it was swallowed up in what I found a stronger, or so intermixed that I felt it not in its full force till after he had left me. I console myself with the hopes of his reaping advantages under the careful eye of a tender parent, which it was not in my power to bestow upon him.

There has nothing material taken place in the political world since you left us. This letter will go by a vessel for Bilboa, from whence you may, perhaps, get better opportunities of conveyance than from any other place. The letter you delivered to the pilot came safe to hand. All the little folks are anxious for the safety of their papa and brother, to whom they desire to be remembered; to which is added the tenderest sentiments of affection, and the fervent prayers for your happiness and safety, of your

PORTIA.



TO JOHN ADAMS.

18 May, 1778.

I HAVE waited with great patience, restraining, as much as possible, every anxious idea for three months. But now every vessel which arrives sets my expectation upon the wing, and I pray my guardian genius to waft me the happy tidings of your safety and welfare. Hitherto my wandering ideas have roved, like the son of Ulysses, from sea to sea, and from shore to shore, not knowing where to find you ; sometimes I fancied you upon the mighty waters, — sometimes at your desired haven, — sometimes upon the ungrateful and hostile shore of Britain, — but at all times, and in all places, under the protecting care and guardianship of that Being, who not only clothes the lilies of the field, and hears the young ravens when they cry, but hath said, “ Of how much more worth are ye than many sparrows ; ” and this confidence, which the world cannot deprive me of, is my food by day, and my rest by night, and was all my consolation under the horrid ideas of assassination, — the only event of which I had not thought, and in some measure prepared my mind.

When my imagination sets you down upon the Gallic shore, a land to which Americans are now bound to transfer their affections, and to eradicate all those national prejudices, which the proud and haughty nation, whom we once revered, craftily instilled into us, whom they once styled their children, I anticipate the pleasure you must feel, and, though so many leagues distant, share in the joy of finding the great interest of our country so generously espoused and nobly aided by so powerful a monarch. Your prospects must be much brightened ; for, when you left your native land, they were rather gloomy. If an unwearied zeal and persevering attachment to the cause of truth and justice, regardless of the allurements of ambition on the one hand, or the threats of calamity on the other, can entitle any one

to the reward of peace, liberty, and safety, a large portion of those blessings are reserved for my friend in his native land.

“O! wouldst thou keep thy country’s loud applause,  
Loved as her father, as her God adored,  
Be still the bold assertor of her cause,  
Her voice in council; (in the fight her sword;)  
In peace, in war, pursue thy country’s good,  
For her, bare thy bold breast and pour thy generous blood.”

Difficult as the day is, cruel as this war has been, separated as I am, on account of it, from the dearest connexion in life, I would not exchange my country for the wealth of the Indies, or be any other than an American, though I might be queen or empress of any nation upon the globe. My soul is unambitious of pomp or power. Beneath my humble roof, blessed with the society and tenderest affection of my dear partner, I have enjoyed as much felicity and as exquisite happiness, as falls to the share of mortals. And, though I have been called to sacrifice to my country, I can glory in my sacrifice and derive pleasure from my intimate connexion with one, who is esteemed worthy of the important trust devolved upon him.

Britain, as usual, has added insult to injustice and cruelty, by what she calls a conciliatory plan. From my soul I despise her meanness; but she has long ago lost that treasure, which, a great authority tells us, exalteth a nation, and is receiving the reproaches due to her crimes. I have been much gratified with the perusal of the Duke of Richmond’s speech. Were there ten such men to be found, I should still have some hopes, that a revolution would take place in favor of the virtuous few, “and the laws, the rights, the generous plan of power delivered down from age to age by our renowned forefathers,” be again restored to that unhappy island.

I hope by the close of this month to receive from you a large packet. I have written twice before this. Some opportunities I may miss by my distance from the capital. I have enjoyed a good share of health since you left me. I have not mentioned my dear son, though I have often

thought of him since I began this letter, because I propose writing to him by this opportunity. I omit many domestic matters because I will not risk their coming to the public eye. I shall have a small bill to draw upon you in the month of June. I think to send it to Mr. McCreery, who, by a letter received since you went away, is, I find, settled in Bordeaux in the mercantile way, and I dare say will procure for me any thing I may have occasion for. I wish you would be so good as to write him a line requesting the favor of him to procure me such things as I may have occasion for, and in addition to the bills which may be drawn, let him add ten pounds sterling at a time, if I desire it. The bills will be at three different times in a year. If they should arrive safe they would render me essential service.

Our public finances are upon no better footing than they were when you left us. Five hundred dollars is now offered by this town, per man, for nine months, to recruit the army. Twelve pounds a month for farming labor is the price, and it is not to be procured under. Our friends are all well and desire to be remembered to you. So many tender sentiments rush upon my mind, when about to close this letter to you, that I can only ask you to measure them by those which you find in your own bosom for

Your affectionate

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

June, 1778.

MY DEAR SON,

'T IS almost four months since you left your native land, and embarked upon the mighty waters, in quest of a foreign country. Although I have not particularly written to you since, yet you may be assured you have constantly been upon my heart and mind.



It is a very difficult task, my dear son, for a tender parent to bring her mind to part with a child of your years going to a distant land ; nor could I have acquiesced in such a separation under any other care than that of the most excellent parent and guardian who accompanied you. You have arrived at years capable of improving under the advantages you will be likely to have, if you do but properly attend to them. They are talents put into your hands, of which an account will be required of you hereafter ; and being possessed of one, two, or four, see to it that you double your numbers.

The most amiable and most useful disposition in a young mind is diffidence of itself ; and this should lead you to seek advice and instruction from him, who is your natural guardian, and will always counsel and direct you in the best manner, both for your present and future happiness. You are in possession of a natural good understanding, and of spirits unbroken by adversity and untamed with care. Improve your understanding by acquiring useful knowledge and virtue, such as will render you an ornament to society, an honor to your country, and a blessing to your parents. Great learning and superior abilities, should you ever possess them, will be of little value and small estimation, unless virtue, honor, truth, and integrity are added to them. Adhere to those religious sentiments and principles which were early instilled into your mind, and remember that you are accountable to your Maker for all your words and actions.

Let me enjoin it upon you to attend constantly and steadfastly to the precepts and instructions of your father, as you value the happiness of your mother and your own welfare. His care and attention to you render many things unnecessary for me to write, which I might otherwise do ; but the inadvertency and heedlessness of youth require line upon line and precept upon precept, and, when enforced by the joint efforts of both parents, will, I hope, have a due influence upon your conduct ; for, dear as you are to me, I would much rather you should have found your grave in the ocean you have crossed, or that any untimely death crop

you in your infant years, than see you an immoral, profligate, or graceless child.

You have entered early in life upon the great theatre of the world, which is full of temptations and vice of every kind. You are not wholly unacquainted with history, in which you have read of crimes which your inexperienced mind could scarcely believe credible. You have been taught to think of them with horror, and to view vice as

“a monster of so frightful mien,  
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen.”

Yet you must keep a strict guard upon yourself, or the odious monster will soon lose its terror by becoming familiar to you. The modern history of our own times, furnishes as black a list of crimes, as can be paralleled in ancient times, even if we go back to Nero, Caligula, or Cæsar Borgia. Young as you are, the cruel war, into which we have been compelled by the haughty tyrant of Britain and the bloody emissaries of his vengeance, may stamp upon your mind this certain truth, that the welfare and prosperity of all countries, communities, and, I may add, individuals, depend upon their morals. That nation to which we were once united, as it has departed from justice, eluded and subverted the wise laws which formerly governed it, and suffered the worst of crimes to go unpunished, has lost its valor, wisdom and humanity, and, from being the dread and terror of Europe, has sunk into derision and infamy.

But, to quit political subjects, I have been greatly anxious for your safety, having never heard of the frigate since she sailed, till, about a week ago, a New York paper informed, that she was taken and carried into Plymouth. I did not fully credit this report, though it gave me much uneasiness. I yesterday heard that a French vessel was arrived at Portsmouth, which brought news of the safe arrival of the *Boston*; but this wants confirmation. I hope it will not be long before I shall be assured of your safety. You must write me an account of your voyage, of your situation, and of every thing entertaining you can recollect.

Be assured I am most affectionately yours,

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

30 June, 1778.

DEAREST OF FRIENDS,

SHALL I tell my dearest, that tears of joy filled my eyes this morning at the sight of his well-known hand? — the first line which has blessed my sight, since his four months' absence, during which time I have never been able to learn a word from him or my dear son, till, about ten days ago, an English paper, taken in a prize and brought into Salem, contained an account, under the Paris news, of your arrival at the abode of Dr. Franklin; and, last week, a cartel, from Halifax, brought Captain Welch, of the *Boston*, who informed that he left you well the 11th of March, and that he had letters for me, but destroyed them when he was taken; and this is all the information I have ever been able to obtain. Our enemies have told us the vessel was taken, and named the frigate which took her, and that she was carried into Plymouth. I have lived a life of fear and anxiety ever since you left me. Not more than a week after your absence, the horrid story of Dr. Franklin's assassination was received from France, and sent by Mr. Purveyance, of Baltimore, to Congress and to Boston. Near two months, before that was contradicted. Then we could not hear a word from the *Boston*, and most people gave her up, as taken or lost. Thus has my mind been agitated like a troubled sea.

You will easily conceive, how grateful your favor<sup>1</sup> of April 25th, and those of our son, were to me and mine; though I regret your short warning, and the little time you had to write, by which means I know not how you fared upon your voyage, what reception you have met with (not even from the ladies, though you profess yourself an admirer of them) and a thousand circumstances which I wish to know, and which are always particularly interesting to near connexions. I must request you always to be minute,

<sup>1</sup> See this letter among those of Mr. Adams.



and to write me by every conveyance. Some, perhaps, which may appear unlikely to reach me, will be the first to arrive. I own I was mortified at so short a letter, but I quiet my heart with thinking there are many more upon their passage to me. I have written several before this, and some of them very long.

Now I know you are safe, I wish myself with you. Whenever you entertain such a wish, recollect that I would have willingly hazarded all dangers to have been your companion ; but, as that was not permitted, you must console me in your absence, by a recital of all your adventures ; though, methinks, I would not have them in all respects too similar to those related of your venerable colleague,<sup>1</sup> whose Mentor-like appearance, age, and philosophy, most certainly lead the politico-scientific ladies of France to suppose they are embracing the god of wisdom in a human form ; but I, who own that I never yet “ wished an angel, whom I loved a man,” shall be full as content if those divine honors are omitted. The whole heart of my friend is in the bosom of his partner. More than half a score of years have so riveted it there, that the fabric which contains it must crumble into dust, ere the particles can be separated. I can hear of the brilliant accomplishments of any of my sex with pleasure, and rejoice in that liberality of sentiment which acknowledges them. At the same time, I regret the trifling, narrow, contracted education of the females of my own country. I have entertained a superior opinion of the accomplishments of the French ladies, ever since I read the letters of Dr. Shebbeare, who professes that he had rather take the opinion of an accomplished lady, in matters of polite writing, than the first wits of Italy ; and should think himself safer, with her approbation, than with that of a long list of literati ; and he gives this reason for it, that women have, in general, more delicate sensations than men ; what touches them, is for the most part true in nature, whereas men, warped by education, judge amiss from previous prejudice, and, referring all things to the mode of the ancients, condemn that by

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Franklin. See the letter to which this is in answer.

comparison, where no true similitude ought to be expected.

But, in this country, you need not be told how much female education is neglected, nor how fashionable it has been to ridicule female learning; though I acknowledge it my happiness to be connected with a person of a more generous mind and liberal sentiments. I cannot forbear transcribing a few generous sentiments which I lately met with upon this subject.

“If women,” says the writer, “are to be esteemed our enemies, methinks it is an ignoble cowardice, thus to disarm them, and not allow them the same weapons we use ourselves; but, if they deserve the title of our friends, ’tis an inhuman tyranny to debar them of the privileges of ingenuous education, which would also render their friendship so much the more delightful to themselves and us. Nature is seldom observed to be niggardly of her choicest gifts to the sex. Their senses are generally as quick as ours; their reason as nervous, their judgment as mature and solid. To these natural perfections add but the advantages of acquired learning, what polite and charming creatures would they prove; whilst their external beauty does the office of a crystal to the lamp, not shrouding, but disclosing, their brighter intellects. Nor need we fear to lose our empire over them by thus improving their native abilities; since, where there is most learning, sense, and knowledge, there is always observed to be the most modesty and rectitude of manners.”<sup>1</sup>

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TO JOHN ADAMS.<sup>2</sup>

✓ Oct. 25, 1778

THE morning after I received your very short letter, I de-

<sup>1</sup> This letter probably failed in reaching its destination. The rough copy only remains, which ends in an abrupt manner, with the quotation as above.

<sup>2</sup> This is taken from a rough draught; the original letter is not now among Mr. Adams's papers. But that it was received by him and the effect which it produced will be seen by reference to his answer dated 18 December, 1778. By that answer too, the date, which is wholly wanting in the copy, is determined as the 25th October of that year.

terminated to devote the day to writing to my friend ; but I had only just breakfasted, when I had a visit from Monsieur Rivière, an officer on board the *Languedoc*, who speaks English well, the captain of the *Zara*, and six or eight other officers, from on board another ship. The first gentleman dined with me, and spent the day, so that I had no opportunity of writing that day. The gentlemen officers have made me several visits, and I have dined twice on board, at very elegant entertainments. Count d'Estaing has been exceedingly polite to me. Soon after he arrived here, I received a message from him, requesting that I would meet him at Colonel Quincy's, as it was inconvenient leaving his ship for any long time. I waited upon him, and was very politely received. Upon parting, he requested that the family would accompany me on board his ship and dine with him the next Thursday, with any friends we chose to bring ; and his barge should come for us. We went, according to the invitation, and were sumptuously entertained, with every delicacy that this country produces, and the addition of every foreign article that could render our feast splendid. Music and dancing for the young folks closed the day.

The temperance of these gentlemen, the peaceable, quiet disposition both of officers and men, joined to many other virtues which they have exhibited during their continuance with us, are sufficient to make Europeans, and Americans too, blush at their own degeneracy of manners. Not one officer has been seen the least disguised with liquor since their arrival. Most that I have seen, appear to be gentlemen of family and education. I have been the more desirous to take notice of them, as I cannot help saying, that they have been neglected in the town of Boston. Generals Heath and Hancock have done their part, but very few, if any, private families have any acquaintance with them. Perhaps I feel more anxious to have them distinguished, on account of the near and dear connexions I have among them. It would gratify me much, if I had it in my power, to entertain every officer in the fleet.

✓ In the very few lines I have received from you, not the



least mention is made, that you have ever received a line from me. I have not been so parsimonious as my friend, —perhaps I am not so prudent; (but I cannot take my pen, with my heart overflowing, and not give utterance to some of the abundance which is in it.) Could you, after a thousand fears and anxieties, long expectation, and painful suspense, be satisfied with my telling you, that I was well, that I wished you were with me, that my daughter sent her duty, that I had ordered some articles for you, which I hoped would arrive, &c. &c.? By Heaven, if you could, you have changed hearts with some frozen Laplander, or made a voyage to a region that has chilled every drop of your blood; but I will restrain a pen already, I fear, too rash, nor shall it tell you how much I have suffered from this appearance of—inattention.

The articles sent by Captain Tucker have arrived safe, and will be of great service to me. Our money is very little better than blank paper. It takes forty dollars to purchase a barrel of cider; fifty pounds lawful for a hundred of sugar, and fifty dollars for a hundred of flour; four dollars per day for a laborer, and find him, which will amount to four more. You will see, by bills drawn before the date of this, that I had taken the method which I was happy in finding you had directed me to. I shall draw for the rest as I find my situation requires. No article that can be named, foreign or domestic, but what costs more than double in hard money what it once sold for. In one letter I have given you an account of our local situation, and of *every thing* I thought you might wish to know. Four or five sheets of paper, written to you by the last mail, were destroyed when the vessel was taken. Duplicates are my aversion, though I believe I should set a value upon them, if I were to receive them from a certain friend; <sup>1</sup> a friend who never was deficient in testifying his regard and affection to his

PORTIA.

<sup>1</sup> By reference to Mr. Adams's reply, it will be seen that the inattention which called forth these complaints was only apparent, and caused by the capture of nearly all the vessels which brought letters.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

Sunday Evening, 27 December, 1778. ✓

How lonely are my days! how solitary are my nights! secluded from all society but my two little boys and my domestics. By the mountains of snow which surround me, I could almost fancy myself in Greenland. We have had four of the coldest days I ever knew, and they were followed by the severest snow storm I ever remember. The wind, blowing like a hurricane for fifteen or twenty hours, rendered it impossible for man or beast to live abroad, and has blocked up the roads so that they are impassable. A week ago I parted with my daughter, at the request of our Plymouth friends, to spend a month with them; so that I am solitary indeed.

Can the best of friends recollect, that for fourteen years past I have not spent a whole winter alone. Some part of the dismal season has heretofore been mitigated and softened by the social converse and participation of the friend of my youth.

How insupportable the idea, that three thousand miles and the vast ocean now divide us! but divide only our persons, for the heart of my friend is in the bosom of his partner. More than half a score of years has so riveted it there, that the fabric which contains it must crumble into dust ere the particles can be separated; for

“in one fate, our hearts, our fortunes,  
And our beings blend.”

I cannot describe to you how much I was affected the other day with a Scotch song, which was sung to me by a young lady in order to divert a melancholy hour; but it had quite a different effect, and the native simplicity of it had all the power of a well-wrought tragedy. When I could conquer my sensibility I begged the song, and Master Charles has learned it, and consoles his mamma by singing it to

her. I will enclose it to you. It has beauties in it to me, which an indifferent person would not feel perhaps.

“His very foot has music in 't,  
As he comes up the stairs.”

How oft has my heart danced to the sound of that music?

“And shall I see his face again?  
And shall I hear him speak?”

Gracious Heaven! hear and answer my daily petition, by banishing all my grief.

I am sometimes quite discouraged from writing. So many vessels are taken, that there is little chance of a letter's reaching your hands. That I meet with so few returns, is a circumstance that lies heavy at my heart. If this finds its way to you, it will go by the *Alliance*. By her I have written before. She has not yet sailed, and I love to amuse myself with my pen, and pour out some of the tender sentiments of a heart overflowing with affection, not for the eye of a cruel enemy, who, no doubt, would ridicule every humane and social sentiment, long ago grown callous to the finer sensibilities, but for the sympathetic heart that beats in unison with

PORTIA'S.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

20 March, 1779.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

YOUR favor of December 9th, came to hand this evening from Philadelphia. By the same post I received a letter from Mr. Lovell, transcribing some passages from one of the same date to him, and the only one, he says, which he has received since your absence, and his pocket-book proves, that he has written eighteen different times; yet possibly you may have received as few from him. The watery



world alone can boast of large packets received ; — a discouraging thought when I take my pen. Yet I will not be discouraged. I will persist in writing, though but one in ten should reach you. I have been impatient for an opportunity, none having offered since January, when the *Alliance* sailed, which, my presaging mind assures me, will arrive safe in France, and I hope will return as safely.

Accept my thanks for the care you take of me, in so kindly providing for me the articles you mention. Should they arrive safe, they will be a great assistance to me. The safest way, you tell me, of supplying my wants, is by drafts ; but I cannot get hard money for bills. You had as good tell me to procure diamonds for them ; and, when bills will fetch but five for one, hard money will exchange ten, which I think is very provoking ; and I must give at the rate of ten, and sometimes twenty, for one, for every article I purchase. I blush whilst I give you a price current ; — all butcher's meat from a dollar to eight shillings per pound ; corn twenty-five dollars, rye thirty, per bushel ; flour fifty pounds per hundred ; potatoes ten dollars per bushel ; butter twelve shillings a pound, cheese eight ; sugar twelve shillings a pound ; molasses twelve dollars per gallon ; labor six and eight dollars a day ; a common cow, from sixty to seventy pounds ; and all English goods in proportion. This is our present situation. It is a risk to send me any thing across the water, I know ; yet if one in three arrives, I should be a gainer. I have studied, and do study, every method of economy in my power ; otherwise a mint of money would not support a family. I could not board our two sons under forty dollars per week apiece at a school. I therefore thought it most prudent to request Mr. Thaxter to look after them, giving him his board and the use of the office, which he readily accepted, and, having passed the winter with me, will continue through the summer, as I see no probability of the times speedily growing better.

We have had much talk of peace through the mediation of Spain, and great news from Spain, and a thousand

reports, as various as the persons who tell them; yet I believe slowly, and rely more upon the information of my friend, than on all the whole legion of stories which rise with the sun, and set as soon. Respecting Georgia,<sup>1</sup> other friends have written you. I shall add nothing of my own, but that I believe it will finally be a fortunate event to us.

Our vessels have been fortunate in making prizes, though many were taken in the fall of the year. We have been greatly distressed for [want of] grain. I scarcely know the looks or taste of biscuit or flour for this four months; yet thousands have been much worse off, having no grain of any sort.

The great commotion raised here by Mr. Deane has sunk into contempt for his character; and it would be better for him to leave a country which is now supposed to have been injured by him. His friends are silent, not knowing how to extricate him. It would be happy for him, if he had the art himself. He most certainly had art enough, in the beginning, to blow up a flame, and to set the whole continent in agitation.

23 April.

More than a month has passed away since writing the above, and no opportunity has yet offered of conveying you a line; next to the pain of not receiving, is that of not being able to send a token of remembrance and affection. (You must excuse my not copying, as paper is ten dollars per quire.) Last week a packet arrived from Brest with despatches for Congress, but no private letters. I was disappointed, but did not complain. You would have written, I know, had you supposed she was coming to Boston. By her we heard of the safe arrival of the *Alliance* in France, which gave me much pleasure. May she have as safe a return to us again. Last week, arrived here the frigate *Warren*, after a successful cruise. She had been out about

<sup>1</sup> The descent of the British, under General Prevost and Colonel Campbell, upon Georgia.

six weeks, in company with the *Queen of France*, and the *Ranger*, Captain Jones. They fell in with, and captured, a fleet, bound from New York to Georgia, consisting of ship *Jason*, twenty guns, and one hundred and fifty men; ship *Maria*, sixteen guns, eighty-four men, having on board eighteen hundred barrels of flour; privateer schooner *Hibernian*, eight guns, and forty-five men; brigs *Patriot*, *Prince Frederick*, *Bachelor John* and schooner *Chance*; all of which are safe arrived, to the universal joy and satisfaction of every well-wisher of his country. The officers who were captured, acknowledge that this loss will be severely felt by the enemy, and it is hoped that it will give General Lincoln important advantages over him in Georgia.

Respecting domestic affairs, I shall do tolerably, whilst my credit is well supported abroad; and my demands there shall be as small as possible, considering the state of things here; but I cannot purchase a bushel of grain under three hard dollars, though the scarcity of that article makes it dearer than other things. Our friends here all desire to be remembered to you. I remind your daughter to write and she promises to, but she does not love it. Charley is very busy gardening, sends his duty, and hopes to write soon. My pen is very bad, but you are so used to the hand you can pick it out, and if it goes into the sea it is no matter. I should be very glad of some woollens by the *Alliance* for winter gowns; nothing will be amiss, unless it be men's white silk stockings which I have no occasion for. I suppose the pair sent among the letters, which came in the *Mifflin*, an accident.

My pen is really so bad that I cannot add any further, than that I am wholly  
Yours..

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

8 June, 1779.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Six months have already elapsed since I heard a syllable



from you or my dear son, and five, since I have had one single opportunity of conveying a line to you. Letters of various dates have lain months at the Navy Board, and a packet and frigate, both ready to sail at an hour's warning, have been months waiting the orders of Congress. They no doubt have their reasons, or ought to have, for detaining them. I must patiently wait their motions, however painful it is ; and that it is so, your own feelings will testify. Yet I know not but you are less a sufferer than you would be to hear from us, to know our distresses, and yet be unable to relieve them. The universal cry for bread, to a humane heart, is painful beyond description, and the great price demanded and given for it verifies that pathetic passage of sacred writ, " All that a man hath will he give for his life." Yet He who miraculously fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes, has graciously interposed in our favor, and delivered many of the enemy's supplies into our hands, so that our distresses have been mitigated. I have been able as yet to supply my own family, sparingly, but at a price that would astonish you. Corn is sold at four dollars, hard money, per bushel, which is equal to eighty at the rate of exchange.

Labor is at eight dollars per day, and in three weeks it will be at twelve, it is probable, or it will be more stable than any thing else. Goods of all kinds are at such a price that I hardly dare mention it. Linens are sold at twenty dollars per yard ; the most ordinary sort of calicoes at thirty and forty ; broadcloths at forty pounds per yard ; West India goods full as high ; molasses at twenty dollars per gallon ; sugar four dollars per pound ; bohea tea at forty dollars ; and our own produce in proportion. Butcher's meat at six and eight shillings per pound ; board at fifty and sixty dollars per week ; rates high. That, I suppose you will rejoice at ; so would I, did it remedy the evil. I pay five hundred dollars, and a new continental rate has just appeared, my proportion of which will be two hundred more. I have come to this determination, to sell no more bills, unless I can procure hard money for them, although I shall be obliged

to allow a discount. If I sell for paper, I throw away more than half, so rapid is the depreciation; nor do I know that it will be received long. I sold a bill to Blodget at five for one, which was looked upon as high at that time. The week after I received it, two emissions were taken out of circulation, and the greater part of what I had, proved to be of that sort; so that those to whom I was indebted, are obliged to wait, and before it becomes due, or is exchanged, it will be good for — as much as it will fetch, which will be nothing, if it goes on as it has done for this three months past. I will not tire your patience any longer. I have not drawn any further upon you. I mean to wait the return of the *Alliance*, which with longing eyes I look for. God grant it may bring me comfortable tidings from my dear, dear friend, whose welfare is so essential to my happiness, that it is entwined around my heart and cannot be impaired or separated from it without rending it asunder.

In contemplation of my situation, I am sometimes thrown into an agony of distress. Distance, dangers, and O! I cannot name all the fears which sometimes oppress me, and harrow up my soul. Yet must the common lot of man one day take place, whether we dwell in our own native land, or are far distant from it. That we rest under the shadow of the Almighty is the consolation to which I resort, and find that comfort which the world cannot give. If He sees best to give me back my friend, or to preserve my life to him, it will be so.

Our worthy friend, Dr. Winthrop, is numbered with the great congregation, to the inexpressible loss of Harvard College.

“Let no weak drop  
Be shed for him. The virgin, in her bloom  
Cut off, the joyous youth, and darling child,  
These are the tombs that claim the tender tear,  
And elegiac song. But Winthrop calls  
For other notes of gratulation high,  
That now he wanders through those endless worlds  
He here so well descried, and wondering talks,  
And hymns their Author with his glad compeers.”

The testimony he gave with his dying breath, in favor of revealed religion, does honor to his memory, and will endear it to every lover of virtue. I know not who will be found worthy to succeed him.

Congress have not yet made any appointment of you to any other court. There appears a dilatoriness, an indecision, in their proceedings. I have in Mr. Lovell an attentive friend, who kindly informs me of every thing which passes relative to you and your situation, and gives me extracts of your letters both to himself and others. I know you will be unhappy whenever it is not in your power to serve your country, and wish yourself at home, where at least you might serve your family. I cannot say that I think our affairs go very well here. Our currency seems to be the source of all our evils. We cannot fill up our Continental army by means of it. No bounty will prevail with them. What can be done with it? It will sink in less than a year. The advantage the enemy daily gains over us is owing to this. Most truly did you prophesy, when you said that they would do all the mischief in their power with the forces they had here.

Many letters are laying in Boston for you, which have been written months. My good uncle Smith yesterday let me know that a letter of marque, bound for Nantes, would sail in a day or two. I eagerly seize the opportunity, and beg you to give my blessing to my son, to whom I have not time now to write. I dare not trust myself with the idea, nor can express how ardently I long to see both parent and son. Our whole family has enjoyed great health in your absence; daughter and sons who delight in talking of papa and brother. I shall not write for any thing until the Alliance returns, and I find what success she has had.

My tenderest regards ever attend you. In all places and situations, know me to be ever,

Ever Yours.



TO JOHN ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

DEAREST OF FRIENDS,

My habitation, how disconsolate it looks! my table, I sit down to it, but cannot swallow my food! O, why was I born with so much sensibility, and why, possessing it, have I so often been called to struggle with it? I wish to see you again. Were I sure you would not be gone, I could not withstand the temptation of coming to town, though my heart would suffer over again the cruel torture of separation.

What a cordial to my dejected spirits were the few lines<sup>2</sup> last night received! And does your heart forebode that we shall again be happy? My hopes and fears rise alternately. I cannot resign more than I do, unless life itself were called for. My dear sons, I cannot think of them without a tear. Little do they know the feelings of a mother's heart. May they be good and useful as their father! Then will they, in some measure, reward the anxiety of a mother. My tenderest love to them. Remember me also to Mr. Thaxter, whose civilities and kindness I shall miss.

God Almighty bless and protect my dearest friend, and in his own time, restore him to the affectionate bosom of

PORTIA.

14 November, 1779.

## TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

12 January, 1780.

MY DEAR SON,

I HOPE you have had no occasion, either from enemies or

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams had returned from France in August, but was required by Congress again to embark at this time, with powers to negotiate a peace with Great Britain. He took with him, upon this occasion, his two eldest sons.

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Adams's note of the 13th November, 1779.

the dangers of the sea, to repent your second voyage to France. If I had thought your reluctance arose from proper deliberation, or that you were capable of judging what was most for your own benefit, I should not have urged you to accompany your father and brother when you appeared so averse to the voyage.

You, however, readily submitted to my advice, and, I hope, will never have occasion yourself, nor give me reason, to lament it. Your knowledge of the language must give you greater advantages now than you could possibly have reaped whilst ignorant of it; and as you increase in years, you will find your understanding opening and daily improving.

Some author, that I have met with, compares a judicious traveller to a river, that increases its stream the further it flows from its source; or to certain springs, which, running through rich veins of minerals, improve their qualities as they pass along. It will be expected of you, my son, that, as you are favored with superior advantages under the instructive eye of a tender parent, your improvement should bear some proportion to your advantages. Nothing is wanting with you but attention, diligence, and steady application. Nature has not been deficient.

These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed. Would Cicero have shone so distinguished an orator if he had not been roused, kindled, and inflamed by the tyranny of Catiline, Verres, and Mark Anthony? The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All history will convince you of this, and that wisdom and penetration are the fruit of experience, not the lessons of retirement and leisure. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities, which would otherwise lie dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman. War, tyranny, and desolation are the scourges of the Almighty, and ought no doubt to be depre-

cated. Yet it is your lot, my son, to be an eyewitness of these calamities in your own native land, and, at the same time, to owe your existence among a people who have made a glorious defence of their invaded liberties, and who, aided by a generous and powerful ally, with the blessing of Heaven, will transmit this inheritance to ages yet unborn.

Nor ought it to be one of the least of your incitements towards exerting every power and faculty of your mind, that you have a parent who has taken so large and active a share in this contest, and discharged the trust reposed in him with so much satisfaction as to be honored with the important embassy which at present calls him abroad.

The strict and inviolable regard you have ever paid to truth, gives me pleasing hopes that you will not swerve from her dictates, but add justice, fortitude, and every manly virtue which can adorn a good citizen, do honor to your country, and render your parents supremely happy, particularly your ever affectionate mother,

A. A.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

20 March, 1780.

MY DEAR SON,

YOUR letter, last evening received from Bilboa, relieved me from much anxiety ; for, having a day or two before received letters from your papa, Mr. Thaxter,<sup>1</sup> and brother, in which packet I found none from you, nor any mention made of you, my mind, ever fruitful in conjectures, was instantly alarmed. I feared you were sick, unable to write, and your papa, unwilling to give me uneasiness, had concealed it from me ; and this apprehension was confirmed by every person's omitting to say how long they should continue in Bilboa.

<sup>1</sup> This gentleman, who was a student at law in the office of Mr. Adams, at the commencement of the troubles, accompanied him in the capacity of private secretary on this mission.



Your father's letters came to Salem, yours to Newburyport, and soon gave ease to my anxiety, at the same time that it excited gratitude and thankfulness to Heaven, for the preservation you all experienced in the imminent dangers which threatened you. You express in both your letters a degree of thankfulness. I hope it amounts to more than words, and that you will never be insensible to the particular preservation you have experienced in both your voyages. You have seen how inadequate the aid of man would have been, if the winds and the seas had not been under the particular government of that Being, who "stretched out the heavens as a span," who "holdeth the ocean in the hollow of his hand," and "rideth upon the wings of the wind."

If you have a due sense of your preservation, your next consideration will be, for what purpose you are continued in life. It is not to rove from clime to clime, to gratify an idle curiosity; but every new mercy you receive is a new debt upon you, a new obligation to a diligent discharge of the various relations in which you stand connected; in the first place, to your great Preserver; in the next, to society in general; in particular, to your country, to your parents, and to yourself.

The only sure and permanent foundation of virtue is religion. Let this important truth be engraven upon your heart. And also, that the foundation of religion is the belief of the one only God, and a just sense of his attributes, as a being infinitely wise, just, and good, to whom you owe the highest reverence, gratitude, and adoration; who superintends and governs all nature, even to clothing the lilies of the field, and hearing the young ravens when they cry; but more particularly regards man, whom he created after his own image, and breathed into him an immortal spirit, capable of a happiness beyond the grave; for the attainment of which he is bound to the performance of certain duties, which all tend to the happiness and welfare of society, and are comprised in one short sentence, expressive of universal benevolence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself." This is elegantly defined by Mr. Pope, in his "Essay on Man."

"Remember, man, the universal cause  
Acts not by partial, but by general laws,  
And makes what happiness we justly call,  
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.  
There's not a blessing individuals find,  
But some way leans and hearkens to the kind."

Thus has the Supreme Being made the good will of man towards his fellow-creatures an evidence of his regard to Him, and for this purpose has constituted him a dependent being and made his happiness to consist in society. Man early discovered this propensity of his nature, and found

"Eden was tasteless till an Eve was there."

Justice, humanity, and benevolence are the duties you owe to society in general. To your country the same duties are incumbent upon you, with the additional obligation of sacrificing ease, pleasure, wealth, and life itself for its defence and security. To your parents you owe love, reverence, and obedience to all just and equitable commands. To yourself, — here, indeed, is a wide field to expatiate upon. To become what you ought to be, and what a fond mother wishes to see you, attend to some precepts and instructions from the pen of one, who can have no motive but your welfare and happiness, and who wishes in this way to supply to you the personal watchfulness and care, which a separation from you deprived you of at a period of life, when habits are easiest acquired and fixed; and though the advice may not be new, yet suffer it to obtain a place in your memory, for occasions may offer, and perhaps some concurring circumstances unite, to give it weight and force.

Suffer me to recommend to you one of the most useful lessons of life, the knowledge and study of yourself. There you run the greatest hazard of being deceived. Self-love and partiality cast a mist before the eyes, and there is no knowledge so hard to be acquired, nor of more benefit when

once thoroughly understood. Ungoverned passions have aptly been compared to the boisterous ocean, which is known to produce the most terrible effects. "Passions are the elements of life," but elements which are subject to the control of reason. Whoever will candidly examine themselves, will find some degree of passion, peevishness, or obstinacy in their natural tempers. You will seldom find these disagreeable ingredients all united in one; but the uncontrolled indulgence of either is sufficient to render the possessor unhappy in himself, and disagreeable to all who are so unhappy as to be witnesses of it, or suffer from its effects.

You, my dear son, are formed with a constitution feelingly alive; your passions are strong and impetuous; and, though I have sometimes seen them hurry you into excesses, yet with pleasure I have observed a frankness and generosity accompany your efforts to govern and subdue them. Few persons are so subject to passion, but that they can command themselves, when they have a motive sufficiently strong; and those who are most apt to transgress will restrain themselves through respect and reverence to superiors, and even, where they wish to recommend themselves, to their equals. The due government of the passions, has been considered in all ages as a most valuable acquisition. Hence an inspired writer observes, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." This passion, coöperating with power, and unrestrained by reason, has produced the subversion of cities, the desolation of countries, the massacre of nations, and filled the world with injustice and oppression. Behold your own country, your native land, suffering from the effects of lawless power and malignant passions, and learn betimes, from your own observation and experience, to govern and control yourself. Having once obtained this self-government, you will find a foundation laid for happiness to yourself and usefulness to mankind. "Virtue alone is happiness below;" and consists in cultivating and improving every good inclination, and in checking and



subduing every propensity to evil. I have been particular upon the passion of anger, as it is generally the most predominant passion at your age, the soonest excited, and the least pains are taken to subdue it;

—“ what composes man, can man destroy.”

I do not mean, however, to have you insensible to real injuries. He who will not turn when he is trodden upon is deficient in point of spirit; yet, if you can preserve good breeding and decency of manners, you will have an advantage over the aggressor, and will maintain a dignity of character, which will always insure you respect, even from the offender.

I will not overburden your mind at this time. I mean to pursue the subject of self-knowledge in some future letter, and give you my sentiments upon your future conduct in life, when I feel disposed to resume my pen.

In the mean time, be assured, no one is more sincerely interested in your happiness, than your ever affectionate mother,

A. A.

Do not expose my letters. I would copy, but hate it.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Sunday Evening, 16 July, 1780. ✓

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAD just returned to my chamber, and taken up my pen to congratulate you upon the arrival of the fleet of our allies at Newport, when I was called down to receive the most agreeable of presents, — letters from my dearest friend. One bearing date March 28th, by Mr. Izard, and one of May 3d, taken out of the post-office; but to what port they arrived first I know not. They could not be

those by the fleet, as in these you make mention of letters, which I have not yet received, nor by the *Alliance*, since Mr. Williams sailed twenty-five days after the fleet, and she was then in France. A pity, I think, that she should stay there when here we are *almost destitute*. Our navy has been unfortunate indeed. I am sorry to find, that only a few lines have reached you from me. I have written by way of Spain, Holland, and Sweden, but not one single direct conveyance have I had to France since you left me. I determine to open a communication by way of Gardoqui, and wish you would make use of the same conveyance.

What shall I say of our political affairs? Shall I exclaim at measures now impossible to remedy? No. I will hope *all* from the generous aid of our allies, in concert with our own exertions. I am not suddenly elated or depressed. I know America capable of any thing she undertakes with spirit and vigor. "Brave in distress, serene in conquest, drowsy when at rest," is her true characteristic. Yet I deprecate a failure in our present effort. The efforts are great, and we give, this campaign, more than half our property to defend the other. He who tarries from the field cannot possibly earn sufficient at home to reward him who takes it. Yet, should Heaven bless our endeavours, and crown this year with the blessings of peace, no exertion will be thought too great, no price of property too dear. My whole soul is absorbed in the idea. The honor of my dearest friend, the welfare and happiness of this wide-extended country, ages yet unborn, depend for their happiness and security upon the able and skilful, the honest and upright, discharge of the important trust committed to him. It would not become me to write the full flow of my heart upon this occasion. My constant petition for him is, that he may so discharge the trust reposed in him as to merit the approving eye of Heaven, and peace, liberty, and safety crown his latest years in his own native land.

The Marchioness,<sup>1</sup> at the Abbé Raynal's, is not the only

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the Marchioness Lafayette.

lady who joins an approving voice to that of her country, though at the expense of her present domestic happiness. It is easier to admire virtue than to practise it ; especially the great virtue of self-denial. I find but few sympathizing souls. Why should I look for them ? since few have any souls, but of the sensitive kind. That nearest allied to my own they have taken from me, and tell me honor and fame are a compensation.

“Fame, wealth, or honor, — what are ye to love ?”

But hushed be my pen. Let me cast my eye upon the letters before me. What is the example ? I follow it in silence. I have repeated to you in former letters that I had received all your letters from Spain, unless you wrote by Captain Trask, who brought me some articles, but no letters. My father desires to be remembered to you, but will, I fear, never again see you. He declines daily ; has a slow fever hanging about him, which wastes his flesh and spirits. These are tender ties, and how far soever advanced in life, the affectionate child feels loth to part with the guide of youth, the kind adviser of riper years. Yet the pillars must moulder with time, and the fabric fall to the dust.

Present my compliments to Mr. Dana.<sup>1</sup> Tell him I have called upon his lady, and we enjoyed an afternoon of sweet communion. I find she would not be averse to taking a voyage, should he be continued abroad. She groans most bitterly, and is irreconcilable to his absence. I am a mere philosopher to her. I am *inured*, but not hardened, to the painful portion. Shall I live to see it otherwise ?

✓ Your letters are always valuable to me, but more particularly so when they close with an affectionate assurance of regard, which, though I do not doubt, is never repeated without exciting the tenderest sentiments ; and never omitted without pain to the affectionate bosom of your

PORTIA.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Dana was appointed by Congress secretary to Mr. Adams upon this mission, and accompanied him in his voyage. He was afterwards sent to Russia as Minister ; upon which occasion Mr. Adams's eldest son went with him to St. Petersburg.



TO JOHN ADAMS.

15 October, 1780.

MY DEAREST FRIEND.

I CLOSED a long letter to you only two days ago, but as no opportunity is omitted by me, I embrace this, as Colonel Fleury was kind enough to write me on purpose, from Newport, to inform me of it, and to promise a careful attention to it. Yet I feel doubtful of its safety. The enemy seems to be collecting a prodigious force into these seas, and is bent upon the destruction of our allies. We are not a little anxious for them, and cannot but wonder, that they are not yet reinforced. Graves's fleet, Arbuthnot's and Rodney's, all here; with such a superiority, can it be matter of surprise, if M. de Ternay should fall a sacrifice? My own mind, I own, is full of apprehension; yet I trust we shall not be delivered over to the vengeance of a nation more wicked and perverse than our own. We daily experience the correcting and the defending arm. The enclosed papers will give you the particulars of an infernal plot,<sup>1</sup> and the providential discovery of it. For, however the belief of a particular Providence may be exploded by the modern wits, and the infidelity of too many of the rising generation deride the idea, yet the virtuous mind will look up and acknowledge the great First Cause, without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground.

I am anxious to hear from you. Your last letter, which I have received, was dated June the 17th. I have written you repeatedly, that my trunk was not put on board the *Alliance*; that poor vessel was the sport of more than winds and waves. The conduct with regard to her is considered as very extraordinary. She came to Boston, as you have no doubt heard. Landais is suspended. The man must be

<sup>1</sup> The treachery of Benedict Arnold.

new made before he can be entitled to command.<sup>1</sup> I hope Captain Sampson arrived safe. He carried the resolve of Congress, which you wanted.

You tell me to send you prices current. I will aim at it. Corn, is now thirty pounds, rye twenty-seven, per bushel. Flour from a hundred and forty to a hundred and thirty per hundred. Beef, eight dollars per pound; mutton, nine; lamb, six, seven, and eight. Butter twelve dollars per pound; cheese, ten. Sheep's wool thirty dollars per pound; flax, twenty. West India articles;—sugar, from a hundred and seventy to two hundred pounds per hundred; molasses, forty-eight dollars per gallon; tea, ninety; coffee, twelve; cotton wool, thirty per pound. Exchange from seventy to seventy-five for hard money. Bills at fifty. Money scarce; plenty of goods; *enormous* taxes. Our State affairs are thus. Hancock will be Governor, by a *very great* majority; the Senate will have to choose the Lieutenant-Governor. Our constitution is read with great admiration in New York, and pronounced by the Royal Governor the best republican form he ever saw, but with sincere hopes that it might not be accepted. How will it be administered? is now the important question.

The report of the day is, that three thousand troops are arrived at New York from England.

Adieu! Most affectionately yours.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

28 January, 1781.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

LAST evening General Lincoln called here, introducing to me a gentleman, by the name of Colonel Laurens, the son,

<sup>1</sup> See the Works of Benjamin Franklin, Sparks's Edition. Vol. viii. p. 485, note.

as I suppose, of your much esteemed friend, the late President of Congress; who informed me, that he expected to sail for France in a few days, and would take despatches from me. Although I closed letters to you, by way of Holland, a few days ago, I would not omit so good an opportunity as the present. 'T is a long time since the date of your last letters, the 25th of September. I wait with much anxiety, listening to the sound of every gun, but none announce the arrival of the *Fame*, from Holland, which we greatly fear is taken or lost, or the *Mars*, from France. Colonel Laurens is enabled, I suppose, to give you every kind of intelligence respecting the army, which you may wish to learn. Mr. Cranch has written you upon the same subject by way of Holland. Your friends here complain that you do not write to them. I suppose Davis threw over half a hundred letters. If you are unfortunate in that way, it is not to be helped.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that a repeal of the obnoxious tender act has passed the House and Senate. The Governor, as has been heretofore predicted, when any thing not quite popular is in agitation, has the gout, and is confined to his bed. A false weight and a false balance are an abomination, and in that light this tender act must be viewed by every impartial person. Who, but an idiot, would believe that forty were equal to seventy-five? But the repeal gives us reason to hope, that justice and righteousness will again exalt our nation; that public faith will be restored; that individuals will lend to the public; and that the heavy taxes, which now distress all orders, will be lessened.

A late committee, who have been sitting upon ways and means for raising money, tell us, that a tax for two years more, equal to what we have paid in the last, would clear this State of debt. You may judge of the weight of them; yet our State taxes are but as a grain of mustard seed, when compared with our town taxes. Clinton, I hear, has sent out a proclamation upon Germain's plan, inviting the people to make a separate peace, which will only be a new



proof of the ignorance and folly of our enemies, without making a single proselyte. Even the revolted Pennsylvania troops gave up to justice the spies, whom Clinton sent to them, offering them clothing and pay, letting him know, that it was justice from their State, not favors from their enemies, which they wanted.

It is reported, that Arnold, with a body of troops, is gone to Virginia, where it is hoped he and his Myrmidons will meet their fate. Had Clinton been a generous enemy, or known human nature, he would, like Aurelian, upon a like occasion, have given up the traitor to the hands of justice ; knowing that it was in vain to expect fidelity in a man who had betrayed his own country, which, from his defection, may learn to place a higher value upon integrity and virtue than upon a savage ferocity, so often mistaken for courage. He who, as an individual, is cruel, unjust, and immoral, will not be likely to possess the virtues necessary in a general or statesman. Yet, in our infant country, infidelity and debauchery are so fashionably prevalent, that less attention is paid to the characters of those who fill important offices, than a love of virtue and zeal for public liberty can warrant ; which, we are told by wise legislators of old, are the surest preservatives of public happiness.

You observe in a late letter, that your absence from your native State will deprive you of an opportunity of being a man of importance in it. I hope you are doing your country more extensive service abroad, than you could have done, had you been confined to one State only ; and, whilst you continue in the same estimation among your fellow-citizens in which you are now held, you will not fail of being of importance to them at home or abroad.

Heaven preserve the life and health of my dear absent friend, and, in its own time, return him to his country and to the arms of his ever affectionate

PORTIA.

P. S. Love to my dear boys. I have sent you a present by Colonel Laurens.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

25 May, 1781.

IN this beautiful month, when Nature wears her gayest garb, and animal and vegetable life is diffused on every side ; when the cheerful hand of industry is laying a foundation for a plentiful harvest, who can forbear to rejoice in the season, or refrain from looking “through nature up to nature’s God ;”

“To feel the present Deity, and taste  
The joy of God, to see a happy world.”

While my heart expands, it, sighing, seeks its associate, and joins its first parent in that beautiful description of Milton.

“Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,  
With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun,  
When first on this delightful land he spreads  
His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
Glistening with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth  
After soft showers ; and sweet the coming on  
Of grateful Evening mild ; then silent Night  
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train :  
But neither breath of morn when she ascends  
With charm of earliest birds ; nor rising sun  
On this delightful land ; nor herb, fruit, flower,  
Glistening with dew ; nor fragrance after showers ;  
Nor grateful Evening mild ; nor silent Night  
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,  
Or glittering starlight, *without thee is sweet.*”

This passage has double charms for me, painted by the hand of truth ; and for the same reason, that a dear friend of mine, after having viewed a profusion of beautiful pictures, pronounced that which represented the parting of Hector and Andomache to be worth them all. The journal in which this is mentioned does not add any reason why it was so ; but Portia felt its full force, and paid a grateful tear to the acknowledgment.

This day, my dear friend, completes eight months since

the date of your last letter, and five since it was received. You may judge of my anxiety. I doubt not but you have written many times since, but Mars, Bellona, and Old Neptune are in league against me. I think you must still be in Holland, from whence no vessels have arrived since the declaration of war. There are some late arrivals from France, but no private letters. I have had the pleasure of hearing of the safety of several vessels which went from hence, by which I wrote to you, so that I have reason to think I have communicated pleasure, though I have not been a partaker in the same way.

This will be delivered to you by Mr. Storer, who is going first to Denmark, and who designs to tarry abroad some time. If you had been a resident in your own country, it would have been needless for me to have told you that Mr. Storer is a gentleman of fair character, I need not add, of amiable manners, as these are so discoverable in him upon the slightest acquaintance.

We are anxiously waiting for intelligence from abroad. We shall have in the field a more respectable army, than has appeared there since the commencement of the war; and all raised for three years or during the war, most of them men who have served before. The towns have exerted themselves upon this occasion with a spirit becoming patriots. We wish for a naval force, superior to what we have yet had, to act in concert with our army. We have been flattered from day to day, yet none has arrived. The enemy exults in the delay, and is improving the time to ravage Carolina and Virginia.

We hardly know what to expect from the United Provinces, because we are not fully informed of their disposition. Britain has struck a blow, by the capture of Eustatia, sufficient to arouse and unite them against her, if there still exists that spirit of liberty, which shone so conspicuous in their ancestors, and which, under much greater difficulties, led their hardy forefathers to reject the tyranny of Philip. I wish your powers may extend to an alliance with them, and that you may be as successful against the artifices of



Britain, as a former ambassador<sup>1</sup> was against those of another nation, when he negotiated a triple alliance in the course of five days, with an address which has ever done honor to his memory. If I was not so nearly connected, I should add, that there is no small similarity in the character of my friend and the gentleman, whose memoirs I have read with great pleasure.

Our State affairs I will write you, if the vessel does not sail till after election. Our friend, Mr. Cranch, goes from here representative, by a unanimous vote. Dr. Tufts, of Weymouth, is chosen senator. Our governor and lieutenant governor, as at the beginning. Our poor old currency is breathing its last gasp. It received a most fatal wound from a collection of near the whole body's entering here from the southward; having been informed, that it was treated here with more respect, and that it could purchase a solid and durable dress here for seventy-five paper dollars, but half the expense it must be at there, it travelled here with its whole train; and, being much debauched in its manners, communicated the contagion all of a sudden, and is universally rejected. It has given us a great shock. Mr. Storer can give you more information.

I have by two or three opportunities acquainted you that I received the calicoes you ordered for me, by Sampson, though many of them were much injured by being wet. I have not got my things yet from Philadelphia. I have acquainted you with my misfortune there, owing to the bad package. I have no invoice or letter from Mr. Moylan, though I have reason to think many things have been stolen, as all Dr. Tufts's are missing, and several of mine, according to Mr. Lovell's invoice, who was obliged to unpack what remained and dry them by a fire, most of them much damaged.

To my dear sons I shall write by this opportunity. I have not received a line from them for this twelvemonth. I hope they continue to behave worthy the esteem of every body, which will never fail to communicate the greatest pleasure

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Temple.

to their affectionate parents. I enclosed an invoice of a few articles by Captain Brown. I will repeat it here. Every thing in the goods way will be an acceptable remittance to

Your ever affectionate

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Braintree, 26 May 1781.

MY DEAR JOHN,

I HOPE this letter will be more fortunate than yours have been of late. I know you must have written many times since I had the pleasure of receiving a line from you, for this month completes a year since the date of your last letter. Not a line from you or my dear Charles since you arrived in Holland, where I suppose you still are. I never was more anxious to hear, yet not a single vessel arrives from that port though several are looked for.

I would recommend it to you to become acquainted with the history of that country, as in many respects it is similar to the Revolution of your own. Tyranny and oppression were the original causes of the revolt of both countries. It is from a wide and extensive view of mankind that a just and true estimate can be formed of the powers of human nature. She appears ennobled or deformed, as religion, government, laws, and custom guide or direct her. Fierce, rude and savage in the uncultivated desert; gloomy, bigoted and superstitious where truth is veiled in obscurity and mystery; ductile, pliant, elegant, and refined, you have seen her in that dress, as well as in the active, bold, hardy, and intrepid garb of your own country.

Inquire of the historic page, and let your own observations second the inquiry, whence arises the difference? and when compared, learn to cultivate those dispositions, and to practise those virtues, which tend most to the benefit and happiness of mankind.

The great Author of our religion frequently inculcated universal benevolence and taught us both by precept and example when he promulgated peace and good will to man, a doctrine very different from that which actuates the hostile invaders and the cruel ravagers of mighty kingdoms and nations.

I hope you will be very particular, when you write, and let me know how you have passed your time, in the course of the year past.

Your favorable account of your brother gave me great pleasure, not only as it convinced me that he continues to cultivate that agreeable disposition of mind and heart which so greatly endeared him to his friends here, but as it was a proof of the brotherly love and affection of a son not less dear to his parents.

I shall write to your brother, so shall only add the sincere wishes for your improvement and happiness of

Your ever affectionate Mother.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

9 December, 1781. ✓

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HEAR the *Alliance* is again going to France, with the Marquis de la Fayette and the Count de Noailles. I will not envy the Marquis the pleasure of annually visiting his family, considering the risk he runs in doing it ; besides, he deserves the good wishes of every American, and a large portion of the honors and applause of his own country. He returns with the additional merit of laurels won at Yorktown by the capture of a whole British army. America may boast, that she has accomplished what no power before her ever did, contending with Britain, — captured two of their celebrated generals, and each with an army of thousands of veteran troops to support them. This event, whilst it must fill Britain with despondency, will draw the Union already framed



still closer and give us additional allies ; and, if properly improved, will render a negotiation easier and more advantageous to America.

But I cannot reflect much upon public affairs, until I have unburdened the load of my own heart. Where shall I begin my list of grievances? Not by accusations, but lamentations. My first is, that I do not hear from you ; a few lines only, dated in April and May, have come to hand for fifteen months. You do not mention receiving any from me except by Captain Casneau, though I wrote by Colonel Laurens, by Captain Brown, by Mr. Storer, Dexter, and many others ; to Bilboa by Trask, and several times by way of France. You will refer me to Gillon, I suppose. Gillon has acted a base part, of which, no doubt, you are long ere now apprized.<sup>1</sup> You had great reason to suppose, that he would reach America as soon or sooner than the merchant vessels, and placed much confidence in him by the treasure you permitted to go on board of him. Ah ! how great has my anxiety been. What have I not suffered since I heard my dear Charles was on board, and no intelligence to be procured of the vessel for four months after he sailed. Most people concluded, that she was foundered at sea, as she sailed before a violent storm. Only three weeks ago did I hear the contrary. My uncle despatched a messenger, the moment a vessel from Bilboa arrived with the happy tidings, that she was safe at Corunna ; that the passengers had all left the ship in consequence of Gillon's conduct, and were arrived at Bilboa. The vessel sailed the day that the passengers arrived at Bilboa, so that no letters came by Captain Lovett ; but a Dr. Sands reports, that he saw a child, who they told him was yours, and that he was well. This was a cordial to my dejected spirits. I know not what to wish for. Should he attempt to come at this season upon the coast, it has more horrors than I have fortitude. I am still distressed ; I must resign him to the kind, protecting hand

<sup>1</sup> For some account of Commodore Gillon, see the works of Benjamin Franklin, Sparks's Edition, Vol. ix. p. 54, note.

of that Being, who hath hitherto preserved him, and submit to whatever dispensation is allotted me.

What is the matter with Mr. Thaxter? Has he forgotten all his American friends, that, out of four vessels which have arrived, not a line is to be found on board of one of them from him? I could quarrel with the climate, but surely, if it is subject to the ague, there is a fever fit as well as a cold one. Mr. Guild tells me, he was charged with letters, but left them, with his other things, on board the frigate. She gave him the slip and he stepped on board of Captain Brown's ship, and happily arrived safe. From him I have learned many things respecting my dear connexions; but still I long for that free communication, which I see but little prospect of obtaining. Let me again entreat you to write by way of Gardoqui. Bilboa is as safe a conveyance as I know of. Ah, my dear John! where are you? In so remote a part of the globe, that I fear I shall not hear a syllable from you. Pray write me all the intelligence you get from him; send me his letters to you. Do you know I have not had a line from him for a year and a half? Alas! my dear, I am much afflicted with a disorder called the *heartache*, nor can any remedy be found in America. It must be collected from Holland, Petersburg, and Bilboa.<sup>1</sup>

And now, having recited my griefs and complaints, the next in place are those of my neighbours. I have been applied to by the parents of several Braintree youth to write to you in their behalf, requesting your aid and assistance, if it is in your power to afford it. Captain Cathcart, in the privateer *Essex*, from Salem, went out on a cruise last April in the Channel of England, and was, on the 10th of June, so unfortunate as to be taken and carried into Ireland. The officers were confined there, but the sailors were sent prisoners to Plymouth jail, twelve of whom are

<sup>1</sup> Her husband was in Holland, her eldest son, John Quiney, at St. Petersburg with Mr. Dana, and her second son, Charles, was then on his way home, and at Bilboa, in consequence of the difficulties with Commodore Gillon, in whose ship he had sailed.

from this town, a list of whom I enclose. The friends of these people have received intelligence by way of an officer, who belonged to the *Protector*, and who escaped from the jail, that in August last they were all alive, several of them very destitute of clothing, having taken but a few with them and those for the summer, particularly Ned Savil and Job Field. Their request is, that, if you can, you would render them some assistance ; if not by procuring an exchange, that you would get them supplied with necessary clothing. I have told them, that you would do all in your power for them, but what that would be, I could not say. Their friends here are all well, many of them greatly distressed for their children, and in a particular manner the mother of Josiah Bass. I wish you to be very particular in letting me know, by various opportunities and ways after the receipt of this, whether you have been able to do any thing for them, that I may relieve the minds of these distressed parents. The Captain got home about three months ago by escaping to France, but could give no account of his men after they were taken.

Two years, my dearest friend, have passed away since you left your native land. Will you not return ere the close of another year ? I will purchase you a retreat in the woods of Vermont, and retire with you from the vexations, toils, and hazards of public life. Do you not sometimes sigh for such a seclusion ? Public peace and domestic happiness ;

“ an elegant sufficiency, content,  
Retirement, rural quiet ; friendship, books,  
Ease and alternate labor ; useful life,  
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.”

May the time, the happy time soon arrive, when we may realize these blessings, so elegantly described by Thomson ; for, though many of our countrymen talk in a different style with regard to their intentions, and express their wishes to see you in a conspicuous point of view in your own State, I feel no ambition for a share of it. I know the voice of fame to be a mere weather-cock, unstable as water



and fleeting as a shadow. Yet I have pride; I know I have a large portion of it.

I very fortunately received, by the *Apollo*, by the *Juno*, and by the *Minerva*, the things you sent me, all in good order. They will enable me to do, I hope, without drawing upon you, provided I can part with them; but money is so scarce, and taxes so high that few purchasers are found. Goods will not double, yet they are better than drawing bills, as these cannot be sold but with a large discount. I could not get more than ninety for a hundred dollars, should I attempt it.

I shall enclose an invoice to the house of Ingraham and Bromfield, and one to De Neufville. There is nothing from Bilboa that can be imported to advantage. Handkerchiefs are sold here at seven dollars and a half per dozen. There are some articles which would be advantageous from Holland, but goods there run high, and the retailing vendues, which are tolerated here, ruin the shopkeepers. The articles put up by the American house were better in quality for the price than those by the house of De Neufville. Small articles have the best profit; gauze, ribbons, feathers, and flowers, to make the ladies gay, have the best advance. There are some articles, which come from India, I should suppose would be lower-priced than many others, — Bengals, nankeens, Persian silk, and bandanna handkerchiefs; but the house of Bromfield know best what articles will suit here. I have been fortunate and unfortunate. The things which came with Jones remain at Philadelphia yet.

Our friends here are all well. Your mother is in rather better health, and my father is yet sprightly. Believe me, with more affection than words can express, ever, ever, yours.

PORTIA.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ 25 October, 1782.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

THE family are all retired to rest ; the busy scenes of the day are over ; a day which I wished to have devoted in a particular manner to my dearest friend ; but company falling in prevented it, nor could I claim a moment until this silent watch of the night.

✓ Look, (is there a dearer name than *friend* ? Think of it for me,) look to the date of this letter, and tell me, what are the thoughts which arise in your mind ? Do you not recollect, that eighteen years have run their circuit since we pledged our mutual faith to each other, and the hymeneal torch was lighted at the altar of Love ? Yet, yet it burns with unabating fervor. Old Ocean has not quenched it, nor old Time smothered it in this bosom. It cheers me in the lonely hour ; it comforts me even in the gloom which sometimes possesses my mind.

✓ It is, my friend, from the remembrance of the joys I have lost, that the arrow of affliction is pointed. I recollect the untitled man, to whom I gave my heart, and, in the agony of recollection, when time and distance present themselves together, wish he had never been any other. Who shall give me back time ? Who shall compensate to me those years I cannot recall ? How dearly have I paid for a titled husband ? Should I wish you less wise, that I might enjoy more happiness ? I cannot find that in my heart. Yet Providence has wisely placed the real blessings of life within the reach of moderate abilities ; and he who is wiser than his neighbour sees so much more to pity and lament, that I doubt whether the balance of happiness is in his scale.

✓ I feel a disposition to quarrel with a race of beings who have cut me off, in the midst of my days, from the only society I delighted in. "Yet no man liveth for himself," says an authority I will not dispute. Let me draw satisfac-

tion from this source, and, instead of murmuring and repining at my lot, consider it in a more pleasing view. Let me suppose, that the same gracious Being, who first smiled upon our union and blessed us in each other, endowed my friend with powers and talents for the benefit of mankind, and gave him a willing mind to improve them for the service of his country. You have obtained honor and reputation at home and abroad. O! may not an inglorious peace wither the laurels you have won.

I wrote you by Captain Grinnell. The *Firebrand* is in great haste to return, and I fear will not give me time to say half I wish. I want you to say many more things to me than you do; but you write so wise, so like a minister of state. I know your embarrassments. Thus again I pay for titles. Life takes its complexion from inferior things. It is little attentions and assiduities that sweeten the bitter draught and smooth the rugged road.

I have repeatedly expressed my desire to make a part of your family. But "Will you come and see me?" cannot be taken in that serious light I should choose to consider an invitation from those I love. I do not doubt but that you would be glad to see me, but I know you are apprehensive of dangers and fatigues. I know your situation may be unsettled, and it may be more permanent than I wish it. Only think how the words, "three, four, and five years' absence," sound? They sink into my heart with a weight I cannot express. Do you look like the miniature you sent? I cannot think so. But you have a better likeness, I am told. Is that designed for me? Gracious Heaven! restore to me the original, and I care not who has the shadow.

We are hoping for the fall of Gibraltar, because we imagine that will facilitate a peace; and who is not weary of the war? The French fleet still remain with us, and the British cruisers insult them. More American vessels have been captured since they have lain here than for a year before; the *General Greene* is taken and carried into Halifax, by which, I suppose, I have lost some small bun-



dles or packages. Beals told me that you gave him seven small packages, which he delivered Captain Bacon for me. The prisoners have all arrived, except Savil, who is yet in France. I mentioned to you before, that some of them had been with me, and offered to repay the money with which you supplied them. I could only tell them, that I had never received a line from you concerning the matter, and that I chose first to hear from you. I would not receive a farthing, unless I had your express direction, and your handwriting to prove, that what you had done was from your private purse, which I was confident was the case, or you would have been as ready to have relieved others, if you had any public funds for that purpose, as those which belonged to this town. I found a story prevailing, that what you had done was at the public expense. This took its rise either from ignorance or ingratitude ; but it fully determined me to receive your direction. The persons who have been with me are the two Clarks, the two Beales, and Job Field.

Adieu, my dear friend. Ever, ever, yours,

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ 13 November, 1782.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

✓ I HAVE lived to see the close of the third year of our separation. This is a melancholy anniversary to me, and many tender scenes arise in my mind upon the recollection. I feel unable to sustain even the idea, that it will be half that period ere we meet again. Life is too short to have the dearest of its enjoyments curtailed ; the social feelings grow callous by disuse, and lose that pliancy of affection which sweetens the cup of life as we drink it. The rational pleasures of friendship and society, and the still more refined sensations of which delicate minds only are susceptible, like the tender blossom, when the rude northern blasts assail

them, shrink within and collect themselves together, deprived of the all-cheering and beamy influence of the sun. The blossom falls and the fruit withers and decays; but here the similitude fails, for, though lost for the present, the season returns, the tree vegetates anew, and the blossom again puts forth.

But, alas! with me, those days which are past are gone for ever, and time is hastening on that period when I must fall to rise no more, until mortality shall put on immortality, and we shall meet again, pure and disembodied spirits. Could we live to the age of the antediluvians, we might better support this separation; but, when threescore years and ten circumscribe the life of man, how painful is the idea, that, of that short space, only a few years of social happiness are our allotted portion.

Perhaps I make you unhappy. No. You will enter with a soothing tenderness into my feelings. I see in your eyes the emotions of your heart, and hear the sigh that is wafted across the Atlantic to the bosom of Portia. But the philosopher and the statesman stifles these emotions, and regains a firmness which arrests my pen in my hand.

25 November.

I last evening received a line from Boston to hasten my letter down or I should again lose an opportunity of conveyance. I was most unfortunate by the *Firebrand's* sailing and leaving all my letters behind. A storm prevented my sending on the day appointed, and she sailed by sunrise the next morning. Though my letters were in town by nine o'clock, they missed. I know, if she arrive, how disappointed you will feel.

I received from France by the *Alexander* yours, bearing no date, but, by the contents, written about the same time with those I received by Mr. Guild. Shall I return the compliment, and tell you in a poetical style,

"Should at my feet the world's great master fall,  
Himself, his world, his throne, I'd scorn them all."

No. Give me the man I love; you are neither of an age

or temper to be allured by the splendor of a court, or the smiles of princesses. I never suffered an uneasy sensation on that account. I know I have a right to your whole heart, because my own never knew another lord; and such is my confidence in you, that if you were not withheld by the strongest of all obligations, those of a moral nature, your honor would not suffer you to abuse my confidence.

But whither am I rambling? We have not any thing in the political way worth noticing. The fleet of our allies still remains with us.

Who is there left that will sacrifice as others have done? Portia, I think, stands alone, alas, in more senses than one. This vessel will convey to you the packets designed for the *Firebrand*. I hope, unimportant as they are, they will not be lost.

Shall I close here, without a word of my voyage? I believe it is best to wait a reply, before I say any thing further. Our friends desire me to remember them to you. Your daughter, your image, your superscription, desires to be affectionately remembered to you. O, how many of the sweet domestic joys do you lose by this separation from your family. I have the satisfaction of seeing my children thus far in life behaving with credit and honor. God grant the pleasing prospect may never meet with an alloy, and return to me the dear partner of my early years, rewarded for his past sacrifices by the consciousness of having been extensively useful, not having lived to himself alone; and may the approving voice of his country crown his later days in peaceful retirement, in the affectionate bosom of

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

✓ 23 December, 1782.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAVE omitted writing by the last opportunity to Holland, because I had but small faith in the designs of the owners or passengers; and I had just written you so largely, by a



vessel bound to France, that I had nothing new to say. There are few occurrences in this northern climate, at this season of the year, to divert or entertain you; and, in the domestic way, should I draw you the picture of my heart, it would be what I hope you still would love, though it contained nothing new. /The early possession you obtained there, and the absolute power you have ever maintained over it, leave not the smallest space unoccupied. / I look back to the early days of our acquaintance and friendship, as to the days of love and innocence, and, with an indescribable pleasure, I have seen near a score of years roll over our heads, with an affection heightened and improved by time; nor have the dreary years of absence in the smallest degree effaced from my mind the image of the dear, untitled man to whom I gave my heart. I cannot sometimes refrain considering the honors with which he is invested, as badges of my unhappiness. The unbounded confidence I have in your attachment to me and the dear pledges of our affection, has soothed the solitary hour, and rendered your absence more supportable; for, had I loved you with the same affection, it must have been misery to have doubted. Yet a cruel world too often injures my feelings, by wondering how a person, possessed of domestic attachments, can sacrifice them by absenting himself *for years*.

“If you had known,” said a person to me the other day, “that Mr. Adams would have remained so long abroad, would you have consented that he should have gone?” I recollected myself a moment, and then spoke the real dictates of my heart. “If I had known, Sir, that Mr. Adams could have effected what he has done, I would not only have submitted to the absence I have endured, painful as it has been, but I would not have opposed it, even though three years more should be added to the number, (which Heaven avert!) I feel a pleasure in being able to sacrifice my selfish passions to the general good, and in imitating the example, which has taught me to consider myself and family but as the small dust of the balance, when compared with the great community.”

It is now, my dear friend, a long, long time, since I had a line from you. The fate of Gibraltar leads me to fear, that a peace is far distant, and that I shall not see you, — God only knows when. I shall say little about my former request; not that my desire is less, but, before this can reach you, 'tis probable I may receive your opinion; if in favor of my coming to you, I shall have no occasion to urge it further; if against it, I would not embarrass you by again requesting it. I will endeavour to sit down and consider it as the portion allotted me. My dear sons are well. Their application and improvement go hand in hand. Our friends all desire to be remembered. The fleet of our allies expects to sail daily, but where destined we know not. A great harmony has subsisted between them and the Americans ever since their residence here. This letter is to go by the *Iris*, which sails with the fleet. I hope it will reach you in safety.

Adieu, my dear friend. Why is it, that I hear so seldom from my dear John? But one letter have I ever received from him since he arrived in Petersburg. I wrote him by the last opportunity. Ever remember me, as I do you, with all the tenderness, which it is possible for one object to feel for another, which no time can obliterate, no distance alter, but which is always the same in the bosom of

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

28 April, 1783.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

At length an opportunity offers, after a space of near five months, of again writing to you. Not a vessel from any port in this State has sailed since January, by which I could directly convey you a line. I have written twice by way of Virginia, but fear the letters will never reach you. From

you, I have lately received several letters containing the most pleasing intelligence.

“Peace o’er the world her olive branch extends.”

Hail, “Goddess, heavenly bright,  
Profuse of *joy* and pregnant with delight.”

The garb of this favorite of America is woven of an admirable texture, and proves the great skill, wisdom and abilities of the master workmen. It was not fabricated in the loom of France, nor are the materials English, but they are the product of our own American soil, raised and nurtured, not by the gentle showers of Heaven, but by the hard labor and indefatigable industry and firmness of her sons, and watered by the blood of many of them. May its duration be in proportion to its value, and, like the mantle of the prophet, descend with blessings to generations yet to come. And may you, my dearest friend, return to your much loved solitude, with the pleasing reflection of having contributed to the happiness of millions.

We have not received any account of the signing the definitive treaty, so that no public rejoicings have taken place as yet. The fifth article in the treaty has raised the old spirit against the Tories to such a height that it would be at the risk of their lives, should they venture here. It may subside after a while, but I question whether any State in the Union will admit them, even for twelve months. What then would have been the consequence, if compensation had been granted them?

Your Journal has afforded me and your friends much pleasure and amusement. You will learn, perhaps, from Congress, that the Journal you meant for Mr. Jackson, was, by some mistake,<sup>1</sup> enclosed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and consequently came before Congress, with other public papers. The Massachusetts delegates applied for it, but were refused it. Mr. Jackson was kind enough to wait

<sup>1</sup> It was this mistake which furnished the principal accusation made against Mr. Adams in Alexander Hamilton’s celebrated pamphlet, published in 1800, upon the eve of the Presidential election.



upon me, and show me your letter to him, and the other papers enclosed; and I communicated the Journal to him. Mr. Higginson writes, that it was moved in Congress by Hamilton, of Virginia, and Wilson of Pennsylvania, to censure their ministers for departing from their duty, in not adhering to their instructions, and for *giving offence* to the Court of France by *distrusting their friendship*. They, however, could not carry their point. It was said, the instruction alluded to was founded upon reciprocity, and that Count de Vergennes had not acted upon that principle. When these gentry found, that it would not be considered in the light in which they wished, they gave out, that, if no more was said upon that subject, the other would drop. This is all I have been able to collect. My intelligence is very imperfect<sup>1</sup> since Mr. Lovell left Congress. Mr. Gerry, I believe, is determined to go again. I shall then have a friend and correspondent who will keep me informed.

Upon receiving a letter from you, in which you desire me to come to you, should you be long detained abroad, I took the liberty of writing to Dr. Lee,<sup>2</sup> requesting him to give me the earliest intelligence respecting the acceptance of your resignation. I do not think it will be accepted, by what I have already learnt. If it is not, I shall still feel undetermined what to do. From many of your letters, I was led to suppose you would not return without permission. Yet I do not imagine the bare renewal of a former commis-

<sup>1</sup> This will account for the errors, which are many and striking in this paragraph. No motion of the kind alluded to appears in the Journal of Congress. But by the papers of Mr. Madison, lately published, we find that it was made, and particularly directed against Mr. Adams. It was offered, however, by Mr. Mercer of Virginia, and seconded by Mr. Madison himself, for reasons which are stated by the latter; but it was found not to be acceptable to a large proportion of the members, particularly to the Eastern delegates, and was, therefore, never pressed to a decision. Neither Mr. Hamilton of New York, nor Mr. Wilson of Pennsylvania, appears to have been anxious to adopt it.

Upon this, the most controverted and debatable ground of the history of our Revolution, which has been elaborately occupied of late by Mr. Sparks, in his various contributions to it, the present is not the fitting occasion to add a word of commentary. — See the *Papers of James Madison*, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Lee, then a member of Congress from Virginia.

sion would induce you to tarry. I shall not run the risk, unless you are appointed Minister at the Court of Great Britain.

Our friends are all well, and desire to be affectionately remembered to you. Where is our son? I hear no more of him than if he was out of the world. You wrote me in yours of December 4th, that he was upon his journey to you, but I have never heard of his arrival. Need I add how earnestly I long for the day when Heaven will again bless us in the society of each other? Whether upon European or American ground, is yet in the book of uncertainty; but, to feel entirely happy and easy, I believe it must be in our own republican cottage, with the simplicity which has ever distinguished it and your ever affectionate

PORTIA.

29 April.

I last evening received yours of February 18th,<sup>1</sup> in which you are explicit with regard to your return. I shall, therefore, (let Congress renew or create what commission they please,) at least wait your further direction, though you should be induced to tarry abroad. I have taken no step as yet with regard to coming out, except writing to Dr. Lee, as mentioned before. Heaven send you safe to your ever affectionate

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 20 June, 1783.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

If I was certain I should welcome you to your native land in the course of the summer, I should not regret Mr. Smith's going abroad without me. Should it be otherwise, should you still be detained abroad, I must submit, satisfied that

<sup>1</sup> See the note of Mr. Adams of this date.

you judge best, and that you would not subject me to so heavy a disappointment, or yourself to so severe a mortification as I flatter myself it would be, but for the general good. A European life would, you say, be the ruin of our children. If so, I should be as loth as you to hazard their imbibing sentiments and opinions, which might make them unhappy in a sphere of life, which 'tis probable they must fill, not by indulging in luxuries for which it is more than possible they might contract a taste and inclination, but in studious and laborious pursuits.

You have before this day received a joint commission for forming a commercial treaty with Britain. I am at a loss to determine whether you will consider yourself so bound by it, as to tarry longer abroad. Perhaps there has been no juncture in the public affairs of our country, not even in the hour of our deepest distress, when able statesmen and wise counsellors were more wanted than at the present day. Peace abroad leaves us at leisure to look into our own domestic affairs. Although, upon an estimate of our national debt, it appears but as the small dust of the balance when compared to the object we have obtained, and the benefits we have secured, yet the restless spirit of man will not be restrained; and we have reason to fear, that domestic jars and confusion will take place of foreign contentions and devastation. Congress have commuted with the army, by engaging to them five years' pay in lieu of half-pay for life. With security for this, they will disband contented; but our wise legislators are about disputing the power of Congress to do either, without considering their hands in the mouth of the lion, and that, if the just and necessary food is not supplied, the outrageous animal may become so ferocious as to spread horror and devastation. Another Theseus may arise, who, by his reputation and exploits of valor, his personal character and universal popularity, may destroy our Amphictyonic system, and subjugate our infant republic to monarchical domination.

Our House of Representatives is this year composed of more than a hundred new members, some of whom, no



doubt, are good men. Nearly all the able and skilful members, who composed the last House, have lost their seats by voting for the return of Mr. Brattle, notwithstanding the strongest evidence in his favor, and the many proofs which were produced of his friendly conduct towards America. For this crime, our worthy friend Mr. Cranch was dropped by this town. The Senate is a loser this year, by the resignation of some excellent members. We have in this State an impost of five per cent., and an excise act, whilst the neighbouring States have neither. Foreigners, finding this the case, carry their cargoes to other states. At this the merchant grumbles, the farmer groans with his taxes, and the mechanic for want of employ. Heaven avert, that, like the Greek republics, we should, by civil dissension, weaken our power and crush our rising greatness, that the blood of our citizens should be shed in vain, and the labor and toil of our statesmen be finally baffled through niggardly parsimony, lavish prodigality, or ignorance of our real interests. We want a Solomon in wisdom, to guide and conduct this great people at this critical era, when the counsels which are taken and the measures which are pursued will mark our future character, either with honor and fame, or disgrace and infamy. In adversity, we have conducted with prudence and magnanimity. Heaven forbid that we should grow giddy with prosperity; or the height, to which we have soared, render a fall conspicuously fatal.

Thus far I had written when your welcome favor of March 28th<sup>1</sup> reached me. I was not disappointed in finding you uncertain with regard to the time of your return. Should the appointment, which I fear and you have hinted at, take place, it would indeed be a dull day to me. I have not a wish to join in a scene of life so different from that, in which I have been educated, and in which my early, and, I must suppose, happier days, have been spent. Curiosity satisfied, and I shall sigh for tranquil scenes,

“And wish that Heaven had left me still  
The whispering zephyr and the purling rill.”

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's letter of this date.

Well-ordered home is my chief delight, and the affectionate, domestic wife, with the relative duties which accompany that character, my highest ambition. It was the disinterested wish of sacrificing my personal feelings to the public utility, which first led me to think of unprotectedly hazarding a voyage. I say unprotectedly, for so I consider every lady, who is not accompanied by her husband. This objection could only be surmounted by the earnest wish I had to soften those toils which were not to be dispensed with; and, if the public welfare required your labors and exertions abroad, I flattered myself that, if I could be with you, it might be in my power to contribute to your happiness and pleasure. But the day is now arrived, when, with honor and well-earned fame, you may return to your native land; when I cannot any longer consider it as my duty to submit to a further separation; and when it appears necessary, that those abilities, which have crowned you with laurels abroad, shall be exerted at home for the public safety.

I do not wish you to accept an embassy to England, should you be appointed. This little cottage has more heart-felt satisfaction for you than the most brilliant court can afford.

My dear John, where is he? I long to see him. I have been very anxious about him. Such a winter journey! I hope he is with you. I want to receive a letter from him.

I will bid you good night. Yours,

PORTIA.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

19 November, 1753.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

YOUR favor, dated at Amsterdam in July, was last evening handed me, and this evening your letter<sup>1</sup> of the 10th of September, by Colonel Ogden, reached me. I had for some

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Adams's note of this date.

time supposed that the delay of public business would retard your return; and, knowing that the definitive treaty was not completed until September, and that the commercial treaty was still to form, I had little reason to expect you, unless your state of health required an immediate resignation of all public business. Your letter, therefore, which informs me of your determination to pass another winter abroad, is by no means unexpected. That we must pass it with a vast ocean between us is a reflection no ways pleasurable, yet this must be the case. I had much to do to persuade myself to venture a summer passage, but a winter one I never could think of encountering. I am too much of a coward. It is now the middle of November. It would be December or January, before I could possibly adjust all my affairs; and I know of no person with whom I am acquainted, except Mr. Jackson of Newburyport, who is now going abroad. Mr. Temple and family sail this month. Besides, there is a stronger objection with me than even a winter's voyage. Congress have not appointed any person yet to the Court of Britain. There are many who wish for that place. Many who have a more splendid title, and many, more thousands to claim it with. I know Mr. Jay has written pressingly to Congress in your favor, and absolutely declined it himself; but whether you will finally be the person is among the uncertain events. One thing, however, is certain; that I do not wish it. I should have liked very well to have gone to France and resided there a year; but to think of going to England in a public character, and engaging, at my time of life, in scenes quite new, attended with dissipation, parade, and nonsense,—I am sure I should make an awkward figure. The retired domestic circle, “the feast of reason and the flow of soul,” are my ideas of happiness, and my most ardent wish is to have you return and become master of the feast. My health is infirm. I am still subject to a severe nervous pain in my head, and fatigue of any kind will produce it. Neither of us appears to be built for duration. Would to Heaven, the few remaining days allotted us might be enjoyed together.



It has been my misfortune, that I could not attend to your health, watch for your repose, alleviate your hours of anxiety, and make you a home wherever you resided. More, says a skilful doctor, depends upon the nurse than the physician. My determination is to tarry at home this winter; and, if I cannot prevail upon you to return to me in the spring, you well know that I may be drawn to you, provided there is any stability in Congress. One strong tie, which held me here, is dissolved. My dear parent<sup>1</sup> used to say, "You must never go, child, whilst I live." It is far from being my inclination.

Mr. Thaxter will be able to give me, when he arrives, the best intelligence upon the subject. I wrote largely to you last week. I hope this letter will go by a French brig.

Adieu, and believe me, whether present or absent,

Most affectionately yours.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Braintree, 20 November, 1783.

THIS evening, as I was sitting with only your sister by my side, who was scribbling to some of her correspondents, my neighbour Field, entered with, "I have a letter for you, Madam." My imagination was wandering to Paris, ruminating upon the long, long absence of my dear son and his parent, so that I was rather inattentive to what he said, until he repeated, "I have letters for you from abroad." The word "abroad," roused my attention, and I eagerly seized the letters, the handwriting and seal of which gave me hopes, that I was once more about to hear from my young wanderer; nor was I disappointed.

After two years' silence, and a journey of which I can scarcely form an idea, to find you safely returned to your

<sup>1</sup> The death of the Rev. Mr. Smith, the father of Mrs. Adams, took place not long before the date of this letter.

parent, to hear of your health and to see your improvement! You cannot know, should I describe to you, the feelings of a parent. Through your father, I sometimes heard from you, but one letter only ever reached me after you arrived in Russia. Your excuses, however, have weight and are accepted; but you must give them further energy by a ready attention to your pen in future. [Four years have already passed away since you left your native land and this rural cottage; humble indeed when compared to the palaces you have visited, and the pomp you have been witness to; but I dare say, you have not been so inattentive an observer as to suppose, that sweet peace and contentment cannot inhabit the lowly roof and bless the tranquil inhabitants, equally guarded and protected in person and property in this happy country as those who reside in the most elegant and costly dwellings. If you live to return, I can form to myself an idea of the pleasure you will take in treading over the ground and visiting every place your early years were accustomed wantonly to gambol in; even the rocky common and lowly whortleberry bush will not be without their beauties.]

My anxieties have been and still are great, lest the numerous temptations and snares of vice should vitiate your early habits of virtue, and destroy those principles, which you are now capable of reasoning upon, and discerning the beauty and utility of, as the only rational source of happiness here, or foundation of felicity hereafter.<sup>1</sup> Placed as we are in a transitory scene of probation, drawing nigher and still nigher day after day to that important crisis which must introduce us into a new system of things, it ought certainly to be our principal concern to become qualified for our expected dignity.

What is it, that affectionate parents require of their

<sup>1</sup> The early promise of John Quincy Adams, although fully appreciated by his parents, awakened in them a corresponding degree of anxiety for his safety whilst in Europe. A few letters addressed to him by his father, at this time in Holland, and breathing the same spirit with these from his mother in America, may serve to illustrate *his* mode of acting upon the mind and principles of his son. They will be found in the Appendix No. 1.

children, for all their care, anxiety, and toil on their account? Only that they would be wise and virtuous, benevolent and kind.

Ever keep in mind, my son, that your parents are your disinterested friends, and that if, at any time, their advice militates with your own opinion or the advice of others, you ought always to be diffident of your own judgment; because you may rest assured, that their opinion is founded on experience and long observation, and that they would not direct you but to promote your happiness. Be thankful to a kind Providence, who has hitherto preserved the lives of your parents, the natural guardians of your youthful years. With gratitude I look up to Heaven, blessing the hand which continued to me my dear and honored parents until I was settled in life; and, though now I regret the loss of them, and daily feel the want of their advice and assistance, I cannot suffer as I should have done, if I had been early deprived of them.

You will doubtless have heard of the death of your worthy grandpapa before this reaches you. He left you a legacy more valuable than gold or silver; he left you his blessing and his prayers that you might return to your country and friends, improved in knowledge and matured in virtue; that you might become a useful citizen, a guardian of the laws, liberty, and religion of your country, as your father (he was pleased to say) had already been. Lay this bequest up in your memory, and practise upon it; believe me, you will find it a treasure that neither moth nor rust can devour.

I received letters from your father last evening, dated in Paris, the 10th of September, informing me of the necessity of his continuance abroad this winter. The season is so far advanced that I readily sacrifice the desire of seeing him to his safety; a voyage upon this coast at this season is fraught with dangers. He has made me a request that I dare not comply with at present. No husband, no son, to accompany me upon the boisterous ocean, to animate my courage and dispel my fears, I dare not engage with so formidable a combatant. If I should find your father fixed



in the spring, and determined to continue abroad a year or two longer, the earnest desire I have to meet him and my dear son might overcome the reluctance I feel at the idea of engaging in a new scene, and the love I have for domestic attachments and the still calm of life. But it would be more agreeable to me to enjoy all my friends together in my own native land; from those who have visited foreign climes I could listen with pleasure to the narrative of their adventures, and derive satisfaction from the learned detail, content, myself, that

“The little learning I have gained,  
Is all from simple nature drained.”

I have a desire that you might finish your education at our University, and I see no chance for it unless you return in the course of the year. Your cousin, W. Cranch, expects to enter next July. He would be happy to have you his associate. I hope your father will indulge you with a visit to England this winter. It is a country I should be fond of your seeing. Christianity, which teaches us to forgive our enemies, prevents me from enjoining upon you a similar vow to that which Hamilcar obtained from his son Hannibal, but I know not how to think of loving those haughty islanders.

Your friends send you their affectionate regards; and I enjoin it upon you to write often to your ever affectionate mother,

A. ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Braintree, 18 December, 1783.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I RETURNED last evening from Boston, where I went at the kind invitation of my uncle and aunt, to celebrate our annual festival. Dr. Cooper being dangerously sick, I went

to hear Mr. Clark, who is settled with Dr. Chauncy. This gentleman gave us an animated, elegant, and sensible discourse, from Isaiah, 55th chapter, and 12th verse. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

Whilst he ascribed glory and praise unto the Most High, he considered the worthy, disinterested, and undaunted patriots as the instruments in the hand of Providence for accomplishing what was marvellous in our eyes. He recapitulated the dangers they had passed through, and the hazards they had run; the firmness which had, in a particular manner, distinguished some characters, not only early to engage in so dangerous a contest, but, in spite of our gloomy prospects, to persevere even unto the end, until they had obtained a peace, safe and honorable, large as our desires, and much beyond our expectations.

How did my heart dilate with pleasure, when, as each event was particularized, I could trace my friend as a principal in them; could say it was he who was one of the first in joining the band of patriots, who formed our first national council; it was he, who, though happy in his domestic attachments, left his wife, his children, then but infants, even surrounded with the horrors of war, terrified and distressed, the week before the memorable 19th of April,—left them to the protection of that Providence which has never forsaken them, and joined himself undismayed to that respectable body, of which he was a member. Trace his conduct through every period, you will find him the same undaunted character, encountering the dangers of the ocean, risking captivity and a dungeon; contending with wickedness in high places; jeoparding his life, endangered by the intrigues, revenge, and malice of a potent, though defeated nation. These are not the mere eulogiums of conjugal affection, but certain facts and solid truths. My anxieties, my distresses, at every period, bear witness to them; though now, by a series of prosperous events, the recollection is more sweet than painful.

Whilst I was in town, Mr. Dana arrived very unexpectedly; for I had not received your letters by Mr. Thaxter. My uncle fortunately discovered him as he came up State Street, and instantly engaged him to dine with him, acquainting him that I was in town and at his house. The news soon reached my ears; "Mr. Dana arrived," — "Mr. Dana arrived," — from every person you saw; but how was I affected? The tears involuntarily flowed from my eyes. Though God is my witness, I envied not the felicity of others, yet my heart swelled with grief; and the idea that I, I only, was left alone, recalled all the tender scenes of separation, and overcame all my fortitude. I retired, and reasoned myself into composure sufficient to see him without a childish emotion. He tarried but a short time, anxious, as you may well imagine, to reach Cambridge. He promised me a visit with his lady in a few days, to which I look forward with pleasure.

I reached home last evening, having left Abby in town to make her winter visit. I found Mr. Thaxter just arrived before me. It was a joyful meeting to both of us, though I could prevail with him to stay only for half an hour. His solicitude to see his parents was great, and though I wished his continuance with me, yet I checked not the filial flow of affection. Happy youth! who has parents still alive to visit, parents who can rejoice in a son returned to them after a long absence, uninjured in his morals, improved in his understanding, with a character fair and untainted.

But, O! my dearest friend, what shall I say to you in reply to your pressing invitation? I have already written to you in answer to your letters, which were dated September 10th, and reached me a month before those by Mr. Thaxter. I related to you all my fears respecting a winter's voyage. My friends are all against it, and Mr. Gerry, as you will see by the copy of his letter enclosed, has given his opinion upon well grounded reasons. If I should leave my affairs in the hands of my friends, there would be much to think of and much to do, to place them in that method and order I would wish to leave them in. Theory and practice are two very



different things, and the object is magnified as I approach nearer to it. I think if you were abroad in a private character, and necessitated to continue there, I should not hesitate so much at coming to you; but a mere American as I am, unacquainted with the etiquette of courts, taught to say the thing I mean, and to wear my heart in my countenance, I am sure I should make an awkward figure; and then it would mortify my pride, if I should be thought to disgrace you. Yet, strip royalty of its pomp and power, and what are its votaries more than their fellow worms?

I have so little of the ape about me, that I have refused every public invitation to figure in the gay world, and sequestered myself in this humble cottage, content with rural life and my domestic employment, in the midst of which I have sometimes smiled upon recollecting that I had the honor of being allied to an ambassador. I am not acquainted with the particular circumstances attending the renewal of your commission. If it is modelled so as to give you satisfaction I am content, and hope you will be able to discharge it so as to receive the approbation of your sovereign.

Adieu.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Braintree, 26 December, 1783.

MY DEAR SON,

YOUR letters by Mr. Thaxter, I received, and was not a little pleased with them. If you do not write with the precision of a Robertson, nor the elegance of a Voltaire, it is evident you have profited by the perusal of them. The account of your northern journey, and your observations upon the Russian government, would do credit to an older pen.

The early age at which you went abroad gave you not an opportunity of becoming acquainted with your own country. Yet the revolution, in which we were engaged, held it up in

so striking and important a light, that you could not avoid being in some measure irradiated with the view. The characters with which you were connected, and the conversation you continually heard, must have impressed your mind with a sense of the laws, the liberties, and the glorious privileges, which distinguish the free, sovereign, independent States of America.

Compare them with the vassalage of the Russian government you have described, and say, were this highly favored land barren as the mountains of Switzerland, and covered ten months in the year with snow, would she not have the advantage even of Italy, with her orange groves, her breathing statues, and her melting strains of music? or of Spain, with her treasures from Mexico and Peru? not one of which can boast that first of blessings, the glory of human nature, the inestimable privilege of sitting down under their vines and fig-trees, enjoying in peace and security whatever Heaven has lent them, having none to make them afraid.

Let your observations and comparisons produce in your mind an abhorrence of domination and power, the parent of slavery, ignorance, and barbarism, which places man upon a level with his fellow tenants of the woods ;

“ A day, an hour, of virtuous liberty  
Is worth a whole eternity of bondage.”

You have seen power in its various forms, — a benign deity, when exercised in the suppression of fraud, injustice, and tyranny, but a demon, when united with unbounded ambition, — a wide-wasting fury, who has destroyed her thousands. Not an age of the world but has produced characters, to which whole human hecatombs have been sacrificed.

What is the history of mighty kingdoms and nations, but a detail of the ravages and cruelties of the powerful over the weak? Yet it is instructive to trace the various causes, which produced the strength of one nation, and the decline and weakness of another; to learn by what arts one man has been able to subjugate millions of his fellow creatures,

the motives which have put him upon action, and the causes of his success ; — sometimes driven by ambition and a lust of power ; at other times swallowed up by religious enthusiasm, blind bigotry, and ignorant zeal ; sometimes enervated with luxury and debauched by pleasure, until the most powerful nations have become a prey and been subdued by these Sirens, when neither the number of their enemies, nor the prowess of their arms, could conquer them. History informs us that the Assyrian empire sunk under the arms of Cyrus, with his poor but hardy Persians. The extensive and opulent empire of Persia fell an easy prey to Alexander and a handful of Macedonians ; and the Macedonian empire, when enervated by the luxury of Asia, was compelled to receive the yoke of the victorious Romans. Yet even this mistress of the world, as she is proudly styled, in her turn defaced her glory, tarnished her victories, and became a prey to luxury, ambition, faction, pride, revenge, and avarice, so that Jugurtha, after having purchased an acquittance for the blackest of crimes, breaks out into an exclamation, “ O city, ready for sale, if a buyer rich enough can be found ! ”

The history of your own country and the late revolution are striking and recent instances of the mighty things achieved by a brave, enlightened, and hardy people, determined to be free ; the very yeomanry of which, in many instances, have shown themselves superior to corruption, as Britain well knows, on more occasions than the loss of her André. Glory, my son, in a country which has given birth to characters, both in the civil and military departments, which may vie with the wisdom and valor of antiquity. As an immediate descendant of one of those characters, may you be led to an imitation of that disinterested patriotism and that noble love of your country, which will teach you to despise wealth, titles, pomp, and equipage, as mere external advantages, which cannot add to the internal excellence of your mind, or compensate for the want of integrity and virtue.

May your mind be thoroughly impressed with the absolute necessity of universal virtue and goodness, as the only



sure road to happiness, and may you walk therein with undeviating steps,—is the sincere and most affectionate wish of

Your mother,  
A. ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

15 March, 1784.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAVE not received a line from you, nor heard a syllable, since yours of 18th November, which I have already acknowledged. I am impatient now to receive further intelligence from you, and to learn where you are. Captain Love, in the ship *Rosamond*, bound to England, must have arrived before this time; by him, I trust you have received many letters from me. I have had but one opportunity of writing since, which was by a vessel bound to Amsterdam. In that letter I was particular with regard to the manner in which I had adjusted our affairs so as to leave them. Mr. Jones designs to have his vessel ready to sail the latter end of May, and from present prospects I think it most probable that I shall accompany Mr. Jones and his lady.

We have intelligence here of the fluctuating state of the British ministry. Whether it bodes well or ill to America, time must determine. It is not a matter of so much consequence to us as it has been in times past. The Court of this Commonwealth is now sitting. They have taken up the recommendation of Congress respecting the refugees, and there has been, as you may well suppose, much debating upon it. It is generally thought that the Court will rise without any thing final taking place. Dr. Gordon, it seems, has been making use of a private letter of yours to him upon this subject, the contents of which are variously reported. The committee who have this matter under

consideration have, as I am informed, sent for the letter, which will speak for itself. I do not feel very anxious with regard to it, since I think I know your prudence so well that you would not communicate to that gentleman any *private* sentiments which you would be loth should be made public. One gentleman sends me word, "Mr. Adams has written to Judge such-a-one. Pray, desire him to be cautious. He is not his friend." And another tells me "Mr. Adams has written a letter to Mr. Speaker. He is not to be confided in. He has no discretion. He communicates the contents of his letter to persons who are not to be trusted. He is in a certain box without knowing it." "And pray," I asked these persons, "why do you not make use of your own pens to give these cautions, and your reasons for so doing; why do you not give Mr. Adams information respecting those matters which it is of importance to him to know?" "O! I am so perplexed and worried with business that I have not time." "Very well, Sir, these gentlemen of whom you speak, I suppose have found time to write to Mr. Adams. One of them I know, has. I know Mr. Adams has always had a friendship for that gentleman, a friendship of an early date, contracted when they were at College, and, I believe, the regard he possesses for Mr. Adams is sincere." "I don't pretend to say that it is not, but he wants prudence."

I have not heard any thing from Congress since my last to you; nor can I learn a single step they have taken since. I am now going to write to Mr. Gerry for information. Our family is well. Of whom does it consist? of myself and niece, and two domestics. Abby is at Milton. General Warren is likely to lose his son Charles, whom they apprehend to be far gone in a hectic. Colonel Quincy died last week of the disorder which I mentioned to you. He made a donation in his will of a hundred pounds to the society of arts and sciences.

I send this letter by the way of Lisbon, and beg you to write me by every opportunity.

Yours most tenderly and affectionately,

A. A.

TO MRS. CRANCH.

On board ship Active, Latitude 44, Longitude 34.  
Tuesday, 6 July, 1784. From the Ocean.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE been sixteen days at sea, and have not attempted to write a single letter. 'Tis true, I have kept a journal whenever I was able ; but that must be close locked up, unless I was sure to hand it you with safety.

'Tis said of Cato, the Roman Censor, that one of the three things, which he regretted during his life, was going once by sea when he might have made his journey by land. I fancy the philosopher was not proof against that most disheartening, dispiriting malady, sea-sickness. Of this I am very sure, that no lady would ever wish a second time to try the sea, were the objects of her pursuit within the reach of a land journey. I have had frequent occasion, since I came on board, to recollect an observation of my best friend's, "that no being in nature was so disagreeable as a lady at sea," and this recollection has in a great measure reconciled me to the thought of being at sea without him ; for one would not wish, my dear sister, to be thought of in that light by those, to whom we would wish to appear in our best array. The decency and decorum of the most delicate female must in some measure yield to the necessities of nature ; and, if you have no female capable of rendering you the least assistance, you will feel grateful to any one who will feel for you, and relieve or compassionate your sufferings.

And this was truly the case of your poor sister and all her female companions, when not one of us could make her own bed, put on or take off her shoes, or even lift a finger. As to our other clothing, we wore the greater part of it until we were able to help ourselves. Added to this misfortune, Briesler, my man-servant, was as bad as any of us. But for Job, I know not what we should have done.



Kind, attentive, quick, neat, he was our nurse for two days and nights ; and, from handling the sails at the top-gallant-mast head, to the more feminine employment of making wine-cordial, he has not his equal on board. In short, he is the favorite of the whole ship. Our sickness continued for ten days, with some intermissions. We crawled upon deck whenever we were able ; but it was so cold and damp, that we could not remain long upon it. And the confinement of the air below, the constant rolling of the vessel, and the nausea of the ship, which was much too tight, contributed to keep up our disease. The vessel is very deep loaded with oil and potash. The oil leaks, the potash smokes and ferments. All adds to the *flavor*. When you add to all this the horrid dirtiness of the ship, the slovenliness of the steward, and the unavoidable slopping and spilling occasioned by the tossing of the ship, I am sure you will be thankful that the pen is not in the hand of Swift or Smollet, and still more so that you are far removed from the scene. No sooner was I able to move, than I found it necessary to make a bustle amongst the waiters, and demand a cleaner abode. By this time, Briesler was upon his feet, and, as I found I might reign mistress on board without any offence, I soon exerted my authority with scrapers, mops, brushes, infusions of vinegar, &c., and in a few hours you would have thought yourself in a different ship. Since which, our abode is much more tolerable, and the gentlemen all thank me for my care. Our captain is an admirable seaman, always attentive to his sails and his rigging ; keeps the deck all night ; careful of everybody on board ; watchful that they run no risk ; kind and humane to his men, who are all as still and quiet as any private family ; nothing cross or dictatorial in his manners ; a much more agreeable man than I expected to find him. He cannot be called a polished gentleman ; but he is, so far as I have seen, a very clever man.

We have for passengers, a Colonel Norton, who is a grave, sedate man, of a good natural understanding, improved by business and converse with mankind ; his literary

accomplishments not very great. A Mr. Green, a Scotchman, I am persuaded ; a high prerogative man ; plumes himself upon his country ; haughty and imperious, but endeavours to hide this with the appearance of politeness, which, however, he is too apt to transgress upon any occasion when a subject arises which does not entirely agree with his sentiments ; he calls himself an Englishman ; has been in the British service during the war, as a secretary on board some of the British admirals. He is a man of sense and of reading, the most so of any we have on board. Next to him is Dr. Clark, to whom we are under obligations for every kindness and every attention, that it is in the power of a gentleman and a physician to show. Humane, benevolent, tender, and attentive not only to the ladies, but to every one on board, to the servant as well as the master, he has rendered our voyage much more agreeable and pleasant than it possibly could have been without him. His advice we have stood in need of, and his care we have felt the benefit of. A brother could not have been kinder, nor a parent tenderer, and it was all in the pleasant, easy, cheerful way, without any thing studied, labored, or fulsome ; the natural result of a good heart, possessed with the power of making others happy.

'T is not a little attention that we ladies stand in need of at sea ; for it is not once in the twenty-four hours that we can even cross the cabin without being held or assisted. Nor can we go upon deck without the assistance of two gentlemen, and when there, we are always bound into our chairs. Whilst you, I imagine, are scorching under the midsummer heat, we can comfortably bear our double calico gowns, our baize ones upon them, and a cloth cloak in addition to all these.

Mr. Foster is another passenger on board, a merchant, a gentleman soft in his manners, very polite and kind ; loves domestic life, and thinks justly of it ; I respect him on this account. Mr. Spear brings up the rear, a single gentleman, with a great deal of good humor, some wit, and much drollery ; easy and happy, blow high or blow low ; can

sleep and laugh at all seasons. These are our male companions. I hardly thought a Lieutenant Mellicot worth mentioning, who is, I believe, a mere pot-companion, though he keeps not with us except at meal-times, when he does not behave amiss. My namesake<sup>1</sup> you know. She is a modest, pretty woman, and behaves very well.

I have accustomed myself to writing a little every day, when I was able, so that a small motion of the ship does not render it more unintelligible than usual; but there is no time, since I have been at sea, when the ship is what we call still, that its motion is not equal to the moderate rocking of a cradle. As to wind and weather, since we came out, they have been very fortunate for us in general. We have had three calm days, and two days contrary wind, with a storm, I called it; but the sailors say it was only a breeze. This was upon the banks of Newfoundland, the wind at east; through the day we could not sit in our chairs, only as some gentleman sat by us with his arm fastened into ours, and his feet braced against a table or chair, that was lashed down with ropes; bottles, mugs, plates, crashing to pieces, first on one side and then on the other; the sea running mountain-high, and knocking against the sides of the vessel as though it would burst them. When I became so fatigued with the incessant motion as not to be able to sit any longer, I was assisted into my cabin, where I was obliged to hold myself in with all my might the remainder of the night. No person, who is a stranger to the sea can form an adequate idea of the debility occasioned by sea-sickness. The hard rocking of a ship in a storm, and the want of sleep for many nights, altogether reduce one to such a lassitude that you care little for your fate. The old seamen thought nothing of all this, nor once entertained an idea of danger. Compared to what they have suffered, I do suppose it was trifling; but to me it was alarming, and I most heartily prayed, if this was only a breeze, to be delivered from a storm.

<sup>1</sup> A Mrs. Adams, a passenger, bearing the same name, but in no way related to the author of the letter.



Our accommodations on board are not what I could wish, or hoped for. We cannot be alone, only when the gentlemen are thoughtful enough to retire upon deck, which they do for about an hour in the course of the day. Our state-rooms are about half as large as cousin Betsey's little chamber, with two cabins in each. Mine had three, but I could not live so. Upon which Mrs. Adams's brother gave up his to Abby,<sup>1</sup> and we are now stowed two and two. This place has a small grated window, which opens into the companion way, and by this is the only air admitted. The door opens into the cabin where the gentlemen all sleep, and where we sit, dine, &c. We can only live with our door shut, whilst we dress and undress. Necessity has no law; but what should I have thought on shore, to have laid myself down in common with half a dozen gentlemen? We have curtains, it is true, and we only in part undress, about as much as the Yankee bundlers; but we have the satisfaction of falling in with a set of well-behaved, decent gentlemen, whose whole deportment is agreeable to the strictest delicacy, both in word and action.

If the wind and weather continue as favorable as they have hitherto been, we expect to make our passage in thirty days, which is going a hundred miles a day. 'Tis a vast tract of ocean which we have to traverse; I have contemplated it with its various appearances. It is indeed a secret world of wonders, and one of the sublimest objects in Nature.

"Thou mak'st the foaming billows roar,  
Thou mak'st the roaring billows sleep."

They proclaim the Deity, and are objects too vast for the control of feeble man. That Being alone, who "maketh the clouds his chariot, and rideth upon the wings of the wind," is equal to the government of this stupendous part of creation.

And now, my dear sister, after this minute account of my important self, which, judging by myself, you take an

<sup>1</sup> The daughter of Mrs. Adams.

affectionate interest in, I call upon you to inquire after your welfare, my much esteemed brother's, and my dear niece's. Not a day or night but I visit your calm retreat, look at my own deserted habitation, and recollect past endearments with a melancholy composure, and really am so vain as to commiserate you on account of the vacuity I fancy my absence occasions.

"We are so formed," says an ingenious writer, "as to be always pleased with somewhat in prospect, however distant, or however trivial." Thus do I gratify myself with the idea of returning to my native land, though the prospect is distant. "Pleasures," says Pope, "are ever in our hands or eyes." I have lost part of the other line but the idea is, that if we are not in the present possession of them, they rise to us in prospect.<sup>1</sup> I will now tell you where I am sitting. At a square table in the great cabin, at one corner of which are Colonel Norton and Mr. Foster, engaged in playing backgammon; at the other, Mr. Green, writing; and at the fourth, Dr. Clark, eating ham. Behind Colonel Norton, Mr. Spear, reading Thomson's "Seasons," with his hat on. Young Lawrence behind me, reading Anson's "Voyages;" Esther,<sup>2</sup> knitting; the steward and boys, bustling about after wine and porter; and last of all, as the least importantly employed, Mrs. Adams and Abby, in their cabin asleep, and this at twelve o'clock in the day. O shame! The Captain comes down and finds me writing; kindly tenders me some large paper to write upon; I believe he thinks I shall have occasion for it. This man has a kindness in his disposition, which his countenance does not promise. Mr. Green comes down from deck, and reports that the mate says we are sixteen hundred miles on our way. This is good nearing; I can scarcely realize myself upon the ocean, or that I am within fourteen hundred miles of the British coast. I rejoice with trembling; painful and fearful ideas will arise and intermix with the

<sup>1</sup> "Pleasures are ever in our hands and eyes;  
And when in act they cease, in prospect rise."

<sup>2</sup> A female domestic of Mrs. Adams.

pleasurable hopes of a joyful meeting of my long absent friend. I frequently recollect some lines of Miss More's, in her "Sir Eldred of the Bower," describing a mixture of hope and anxiety. She says :

" 'T was such a sober sense of joy,  
As angels well might keep ;  
A joy chastised by piety,  
A joy prepared to weep."

I shall write, whilst I am on board, whenever I can catch a quiet time. It is an amusement to me ; reading tires one ; work I do sometimes, but when there is no writing, there is less pleasure in working ; I shall keep the letter open until I arrive, and put it on board the first vessel I find coming to America. 'Tis impossible for me to find any variety at sea to entertain my friends with, so that this letter, with all its inaccuracies, must be submitted to them. Do not however expose me, especially where I have a little credit ; you know very well that affection and intimacy will cover a multitude of faults.

7 July.

If I did not write every day, I should lose the days of the month and of the week ; confined all day on account of the weather, which is foggy, misty, and wet. You can hardly judge how irksome this confinement is. When the whole ship is at our service, it is little better than a prison. We suppose ourselves near the Western Islands. O dear variety ! how pleasing to the human mind is change. I cannot find such a fund of entertainment within myself as not to require outward objects for my amusement. Nature abounds with variety, and the mind, unless fixed down by habit, delights in contemplating new objects, and the variety of scenes which present themselves to the senses were certainly designed to prevent our attention from being too long fixed upon any object. "This," says a late celebrated medical writer, "greatly conduces to the health of the



animal frame ; your studious people and your deep thinkers," he observes, "seldom enjoy either health or spirits."

I have been in much trouble, upon looking over my letters since I came on board, to find those given me by my friend, Mrs. Warren, missing. I cannot account for it in any other way, than that I must have put them into the pocket of the chaise, when I received them, which I recollect ; and I did not think to take them out. You remember the day with all the circumstances, and will accordingly apologize to our friend, whose goodness, I know, will pardon the omission, nor add to my mortification by charging it to inattention.

8 July.

Another wet, drizzly day, but we must not complain, for we have a fair wind, our sails all square, and go at seven knots an hour. I have made a great acquisition. I have learnt the names and places of all the masts and sails ; and the Captain compliments me by telling me that he is sure I know well enough how to *steer*, to take a trick at the helm. I may do pretty well in fair weather, but 't is your masculine spirits that are made for storms. I love the tranquil scenes of life. Nor can I look forward to those in which 't is probable I shall soon be engaged with those pleasurable ideas, which a retrospect of the past presents to my mind.

I went last evening upon deck, at the invitation of Mr. Foster, to view that phenomenon of Nature, a blazing ocean. A light flame spreads over the ocean, in appearance, with thousands of thousands of sparkling gems, resembling our fire-flies in a dark night. It has a most beautiful appearance. I never view the ocean without being filled with ideas of the sublime, and am ready to break forth with the Psalmist, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; in wisdom has thou made them all."

Saturday, 10th.

Yesterday was a very pleasant day. Very little wind,

but a fine sun and a smooth sea. I spent most of the day upon deck, reading; it was not, however, so warm but a baize gown was very comfortable. The ship has gradually become less irksome to me. If our cook was but tolerably clean, I could relish my food. But he is a great, dirty, lazy negro, with no more knowledge of cookery than a savage, nor any kind of order in the distribution of his dishes; but on they come, higgledy-piggledy, with a leg of pork all bristly; a quarter of an hour after, a pudding; or, perhaps, a pair of roast fowls, first of all, and then will follow one by one a piece of beef, and when dinner is nearly completed, a plate of potatoes. Such a fellow is a real imposition upon the passengers. But gentlemen know but little about the matter, and if they can get enough to eat five times a day, all goes well. We ladies have not eaten, upon our whole passage, more than just enough to satisfy nature, or to keep body and soul together.

Thursday, 15th of July.

On Sunday I wrote part of a letter to sister Shaw, since which I have not used my pen, even in my journal. Monday we had a fair wind, but too much to be able to write, as it was right aft, and we pitched exceedingly, which is a motion more disagreeable to me than the rocking, though less fatiguing. On Tuesday a calm. Should you not suppose that in a calm we at least had the satisfaction of lying still? Alas! it is far otherwise, as my flesh and bones witness; a calm generally succeeds a storm or a fresh breeze; the sea has a great swell after the wind is silent, so that the ship lies entirely at the mercy of the waves, and is knocked from side to side with a force you can form no idea of without experience. I have been more wearied and worn out with the motion and exercise of a calm than in riding fifty miles in a day. We have had three days in succession nearly calm; the first is the most troublesome, as the motion of the sea subsides in a degree. It is, however, a great trial of one's patience, to think yourself within a few days of your desired port, to look at it as the promised land, and yet to be held fast;

“Ye too, ye winds, I raise my voice to you.  
In what far distant region of the sky,  
Hushed in deep silence, sleep you when 't is calm?”

I begin to think, that a calm is not desirable in any situation in life. Every object is most beautiful in motion; a ship under sail, trees gently agitated with the wind, and a fine woman dancing, are three instances in point. Man was made for action and for bustle too, I believe. I am quite out of conceit with calms. I have more reason for it, too, than many others, for the dampness of the ship has for several days threatened me with the rheumatism; and yesterday morning I was seized with it in good earnest. I could not raise my head, nor get out of bed, without assistance. I had a good deal of fever, and was very sick. I was fearful of this before I came to sea, and had proper medicine put up, which the doctor administered. What with that, good nursing and rubbing, flannel, &c., I am able to-day to sit up in my bed and write, as you see. To-day we have a small wind, but 't is right ahead. This is still mortifying, but what we had reason to expect. Patience, patience, patience, is the first, second, and third virtue of a seaman, or, rather, as necessary to him as to a statesman. Three days' good wind would give us land.

Friday.

We have another wet, misty day; the cabin so damp that I dare not sit in it; I am therefore obliged, confined as it is, to keep in my own little room, and upon my bed. I long for the day which will give us land. Esther makes but a poor hand at sea. Scarcely a day, but what she is sick some part of it. I hope she will be the better for it when she gets on shore. We have but one passenger whom we should have been willing to have been without. I have no particular reason to dislike him, as he is studiously complaisant to me; but I know his politeness to me is not personally upon my own account, but because of my connexion, which gives me importance sufficient to entitle me to his *notice*. Abby says he is exactly such a character as Mr. A——. I really think there is a striking resemblance.



He was always inquiring, "Who was such a general? What was his origin and rank in life?" I have felt a disposition to quarrel with him several times, but have restrained myself, and only observed to him mildly, that merit, not title, gave a man preëminence in our country; that I did not doubt it was a mortifying circumstance to the British nobility to find themselves so often conquered by mechanics and mere husbandmen; but that we esteemed it our glory to draw such characters not only into the field, but into the Senate; and I believed no one would deny that they had shone in both. All our passengers enjoyed this conversation, and the *gentleman* was civil enough to drop the subject; but the venom spits out very often; yet the creature is sensible and entertaining when upon indifferent subjects. He is a haughty Scotchman; he hates the French, and upon all occasions ridicules them and their country. I fancy, from his haughty airs, that his own rank in life has not been superior to those whom he affects to despise. He is not a man of liberal sentiments, and is less beloved than any passenger we have on board. A man's humor contributes much to the making him agreeable or otherwise. Dark and sour humors, especially those which have a spice of malevolence in them, are vastly disagreeable. Such men have no music in their souls. I believe he would hardly be so complaisant, if he knew how meanly I thought of him; but he deserves it all; his whole countenance shows his heart.

Saturday, 17 July.

Give me joy, my dear sister; we have sounded to-day and found bottom, fifty-five fathom. We have seen, through the course of the day, twenty different sail, and spoke with a small boat upon a smuggling expedition, which assured us we were within the Channel.

18 July.

This day four weeks, we came on board. Are you not all calculating to-day that we are near the land? Happily

you are not wrong in your conjectures. I do not despair of seeing it yet before night, though our wind is very small and light. The captain has just been down to advise us, as the vessel is so quiet, to get what things we wish to carry on shore into our small trunks. He hopes to land us at Portsmouth, seventy miles distant from London, to-morrow or next day; from thence we are to proceed, in post-chaises, to London. The ship may be a week in the Channel before she will be able to get up.

Deal, 20 July.

Heaven be praised, I have safely landed upon the British coast. How flattering, how smooth the ocean, how delightful was Sunday, the 18th of July. We flattered ourselves with the prospect of a gentle breeze to carry us on shore at Portsmouth, where we agreed to land, as going up the Channel always proves tedious; but on Sunday night the wind shifted to the southwest, which, upon this coast, is the same with our northeast winds. It blew a gale on Sunday night, on Monday and Monday night, equal to an equinoctial. We were obliged to carry double-reefed topsails only, and what added to our misfortunes was, that though we had made land the day before, it was so thick that we could not certainly determine what land it was. It is now Tuesday, and I have slept only four hours since Saturday night, such was the tossing and tumbling on board our ship. The captain never left the deck the whole time, either to eat or sleep, though they told me there was no danger; nor do I suppose that there really was any, as we had sea-room enough. Yet, the great number of vessels constantly coming out of the Channel, and the apprehension of being run down, or being nearer the land than we imagined, kept me constantly agitated. Added to this, I had a violent sick headache. O! what would I have given to have been quiet upon the land. You will hardly wonder, then, at the joy we felt this day in seeing the cliffs of Dover, Dover castle, and town. The wind

was in some measure subsided. It rained, however, and was as squally as the month of March; the sea ran very high; a pilot-boat came on board at about ten o'clock this morning. The captain came to anchor with his ship in the Downs, and the little town of Deal lay before us. Some of the gentlemen talked of going on shore with the pilot-boat, and sending for us if the wind subsided. The boat was about as large as a Charlestown ferry-boat, and the distance from the ship about twice as far as from Boston to Charlestown; a shore as bold as Nantasket beach; no wharf, but you must be run right on shore by a wave, where a number of men stand to catch hold of the boat and draw it up. The surf ran six feet high, but this we did not know until driven on by a wave; for the pilots, eager to get money, assured the gentlemen they could land us safe, without our being wet; and, as we saw no prospect of its being better through the day, we accordingly agreed to go. We were wrapped up and lowered from the ship into the boat; the whole ship's crew eager to assist us; the gentlemen attentive and kind as though we were all brothers and sisters. We have spent a month together, and were as happy as the sea would permit us to be. We set off from the vessel, now mounting upon the top of a wave high as a steeple, and then so low that the boat was not to be seen. I could keep myself up no other way than as one of the gentlemen stood braced up against the boat, fast hold of me, and I with both my arms round him; the other ladies were held in the same manner, whilst every wave gave us a broadside, and finally a wave landed us with the utmost force upon the beach, the broadside of the boat right against the shore, which was owing to the bad management of the men, and the high sea.

(Thus far I had proceeded in my account, when a summons to tea prevented my adding more, since which I have not been able to take my pen. Though now, at my lodgings in London, I will take up the thread where I left it, until the whole ball is unwound. Every particular will be interesting to my friends, I presume, and to no others expose this incorrect scrawl.)



We consequently all pressed upon the side next the shore, to get out as quick as possible, which we need not have done, if we had known what I afterwards found to be the case, that it was the only way in which we could be landed, and not, as I at first supposed, owing to the bad management of the boatmen. We should have sat still for a succession of waves to have carried us up higher, but the roar of them terrified us all, and we expected the next would fill our boat ; so out we sprang, as fast as possible, sinking every step into the sand, and looking like a parcel of Naiads, just rising from the sea. A public house was fortunately just at hand, into which we thankfully entered, changed our clothing, dried ourselves, and not being able to procure carriages that day, we engaged them for six o'clock the next morning, and took lodgings there, all of us, ten in number. Mr. Green set off immediately for London ; nobody mourned. We were all glad to retire early to rest. For myself, I was so faint and fatigued, that I could get but little. We rose at five, and, our post-chaises being all at the door, we set off, in the following order ; Mr. Foster, myself, and Esther, in one, Dr. Clark and Abby in the second, Colonel Norton, Mrs. Adams and brother, in the third, and Mr. Spear and Lieutenant Mellicot brought up the rear. Our first stage was eighteen miles, from Deal to Canterbury, where we breakfasted ; the roads are fine, and a stone a novelty ; I do not recollect to have seen one, except the pavements of Canterbury and other towns, from Deal to London, which is seventy-two miles. Vast fields of wheat, oats, English beans, and the horse-bean, with hops, are the produce of the country through which we passed, which is cultivated like a garden down to the very edge of the road, and what surprised me was that very little was enclosed within fences. Hedge fences are almost the only kind you see ; no cattle at large without a herdsman ; the oxen are small, but the cows and sheep very large, such as I never saw before. When we arrive at the end of our stage, we discharge the first carriages, and call for new ones, which will be ready a few moments after you issue your orders. Call for breakfast, you have it, perhaps, in ten min-

utes, for ten people, with the best of attendance, and at a reasonable price. Canterbury is a larger town than Boston. It contains a number of old Gothic cathedrals, which are all of stone, very heavy, with but few windows, which are grated with large bars of iron, and look more like jails for criminals, than places designed for the worship of the Deity. One would suppose, from the manner in which they are guarded, that they apprehended devotion would be stolen. They have a most gloomy appearance, and really made me shudder. The houses, too, have a heavy look, being chiefly thatched roofs, or covered with crooked brick tiles. Now and then you would see upon the road a large wood, looking like a forest, for a whole mile, enclosed with a high brick wall, or cemented stone; an enormous iron gate would give one a peep, as we passed, of a large pile of building, which looked like the castles of some of the ancient barons; but, as we were strangers in the country we could only conjecture what they were, and what they might have been. We proceeded from Canterbury to Rochester, about fifteen miles, another pretty town, not so large as the former. From thence to Chatham, where we stopped at a very elegant inn to dine. As soon as you drive into the yard, you have at these places as many footmen round you as you have carriages, who, with their politest airs, take down the step of your carriage, assist you out, inquire if you want fresh horses or carriages; "Will supply you directly, Sir," is the answer; a well dressed hostess steps forward, making a lady-like appearance, and wishes your commands; if you desire a chamber, the chambermaid attends; you request dinner, say in half an hour: the bill of fare is directly brought; you mark what you wish to have, and suppose it to be a variety of fish, fowl, and meat, all of which we had, up to eight different dishes besides vegetables. The moment the time you stated is out, you will have your dinner upon table in as elegant a style as at any gentleman's table, with your powdered waiters, and the master or mistress always brings the first dish upon table in person. But you must know that travelling in a post-chaise is what entitles you to all this respect.

From Chatham we proceeded on our way as fast as possible, wishing to pass Blackheath before dark. Upon this road, a gentleman alone in a chaise passed us, and very soon a coach before us stopped, and there was a hue and cry, "A robbery, a robbery!" The man in the chaise was the person robbed, and this in open day with carriages constantly passing. We were not a little alarmed, and every one was concealing his money. Every place we passed and every post-chaise we met was crying out, "A robbery!" Where the thing is so common, I was surprised to see such an alarm. The robber was pursued and taken in about two miles, and we saw the poor wretch, ghastly and horrible, brought along on foot; his horse ridden by a person who took him, who also had his pistol. He looked like a youth of twenty only, attempted to lift his hat, and looked despair. You can form some idea of my feelings when they told him, "Ay, you have but a short time; the assize sits next month; and then, my lad, you swing." Though every robber may deserve death, yet to exult over the wretched is what *our* country is not accustomed to. Long may it be free from such villanies, and long may it preserve a commiseration for the wretched.

We proceeded, until at about eight o'clock I was set down at Low's Hotel in Covent Garden, the Court end of the town. These lodgings I took only for one night, until others more private could be procured. As I found Mr. Adams was not here, I did not wish such expensive apartments. It was the hotel at which he kept, when he resided here. Mr. Spear set out in quest of Mr. Smith; but he had received intelligence of my coming out with Captain Lyde, and had been in quest of me but half an hour before at this very place. Mr. Spear was obliged to go first to the custom-house, and, as good fortune would have it, Mr. Smith and Mr. Storer were near it and saw him alight from the coach, upon which he informed them of my arrival. Though a mile distant, they set out upon a full run, (they say,) and very soon, to our mutual satisfaction, we met in the hotel. "How do you?" and "How do ye?" "We



rejoice to see you here ; ” and a thousand such kind of inquiries as take place between friends, who have not seen each other for a long time, naturally occurred. My first inquiry was for Mr. Adams. I found that my son had been a month waiting for my arrival in London, expecting me with Callaghan, but that, upon getting letters by him, he returned to the Hague. Mr. Smith had received a letter from his father, acquainting him that I had taken passage with Captain Lyde. This intelligence he forwarded three days before I came, so that I hourly expect either Mr. Adams or Master John. I should have mentioned, that Mr. Smith had engaged lodgings for me, to which Mr. Storer and he accompanied me this morning, after paying a guinea and a half for tea last evening, and lodging and breakfast, a coach included, not however to carry me a greater distance than from your house to our own. The gentlemen all took less expensive lodgings than mine, excepting Dr. Clark, who tarried with us. He said he would not quit us until we were fixed in our present hotel ; the direction to which is “ Osborne’s New Family Hotel, Adelphi, at Mrs. Sheffield’s, No. 6.” Here we have a handsome drawing-room, genteelly furnished, and a large lodging-room. We are furnished with a cook, chambermaid, waiter, &c., for three guineas a week ; but in this is not included a mouthful of victuals or drink, all of which is to be paid for separately.

Friday, 24 July.

I have little time for writing now, I have so many visitors. I hardly know how to think myself out of my own country, I see so many Americans about me. The first persons who called to see me after my arrival here, were Mr. Jackson, Mr. Winslow Warren, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Ward Boylston, Mrs. Atkinson, and yesterday morning before I had breakfasted, (for the fashionable hours of the city had taken hold of me, not out of choice but necessity ; Miss A. having a hair-dresser. I had directed breakfast at nine o’clock ; it was ten, however, but those were early visiting hours for this fine city, yet) whilst I was breakfasting, who should be

announced to me but *Parson Walter* and Mrs. Hallowell?<sup>1</sup> both appeared very glad to see me. Mrs. Hallowell treated me with her old affability and engaged me to dine with her to-day; "not," says she, "(to a feast, for we make none; but to an unceremonious family dinner.) Luxury," says she, "is the mode, but we know, too, how to practise frugality and economy."

I am not a little surprised to find dress, unless upon public occasions, so little regarded here. The gentlemen are very plainly dressed, and the ladies much less so than with us. 'Tis true, you must put a hoop on and have your hair dressed, but a common straw hat, no cap, with only a ribbon upon the crown, is thought dress sufficient to go into company. Muslins are much in taste; no silks but lustrings worn; but send not to London for any article you want; you may purchase any thing you can name much lower in Boston. I went yesterday into Cheapside to purchase a few articles, but found every thing higher than in Boston. Silks are in a particular manner so; they say, when they are exported, there is a drawback upon them which makes them lower with us. Our country, alas, our country! they are extravagant to astonishment in entertainments compared with what Mr. Smith and Mr. Storer tell me of this. You will not find at a gentleman's table more than two dishes of meat, though invited several days beforehand. Mrs. Atkinson went out with me yesterday, and Mrs. Hay, to the shops. I returned and dined with Mrs. Atkinson, by her invitation the evening before, in company with Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hay, Mr. Appleton. We had a turbot, a soup, and a roast leg of lamb, with a cherry pie. I was more gratified by the social, friendly style in which I was treated, than if a sumptuous feast had been set before me. Mr. Gorham, a Dr. Parker, Mr. Bromfield, and a Mr. Murray from the Hague, came to see me yesterday morning; and, when I returned last evening, I found cards left by a number of gentlemen, some of whom I knew, others I did not; but,

<sup>1</sup> Persons who left Massachusetts on account of their adherence to the British side.

knowing Mr. Adams, and being Americans, they called to make their compliments. Prentice Cushing I met with yesterday at Mr. A.'s. I am going to-day to see Mr. Copley's pictures. I am told he has an excellent likeness of Mr. Adams. Mr. Murray informed me, that he left Mr. Adams last Friday excessively anxious for my arrival. He had removed Mr. Dumas and family in expectation of my coming. He says, John, with whom he went to the Hague, was melancholy when Callaghan arrived without me, and Mr. Adams more so. I have sent to-day by the post, to acquaint him with my being here, but hope every hour to see him or Master John.

The wind has prevented the arrival of the post. The city of London is pleasanter than I expected; the buildings more regular, the streets much wider, and more sunshine than I thought to have found; but this, they tell me, is the pleasantest season to be in the city. At my lodgings I am as quiet as at any place in Boston; nor do I feel as if it could be any other place than Boston. Dr. Clark visits us every day; says he cannot feel at home anywhere else; declares he has not seen a handsome woman since he came into the city; that every old woman looks like Mrs. H——, and every young one like — like the D—l. They paint here nearly as much as in France, but with more art. The head-dress disfigures them in the eye of an American. I have seen many ladies, but not one elegant one since I came; there is not to me that neatness in their appearance, which you see in our ladies.

The American ladies are much admired here by the gentlemen, I am told, and in truth I wonder not at it. O, my country, my country! preserve, preserve the little purity and simplicity of manners you yet possess. Believe me, they are jewels of inestimable value; the softness, peculiarly characteristic of our sex, and which is so pleasing to the gentlemen, is wholly laid aside here for the masculine attire and manners of Amazonians.

This moment a very polite card is delivered me from Mrs. Hallowell, desiring me to remove my lodgings to her



house whilst I continue in London; to which I have replied, with thanks, excusing myself, that I am very well accommodated, and in hourly expectation of my son; not the less obliged, however, by her politeness. Mr. Elworthy I have not yet seen, though I have had several messages from him. This is not owing to inattention in him, but to being informed that every thing was done for me before my arrival, which I stood in need of. Our ship is not yet got up the Channel; what a time we should have had of it, if we had not landed. Mr. Smith expects to sail on Monday or Tuesday; I shall keep open this letter until he goes; let sister Shaw see it, and read such parts as you think proper to the rest of our friends; but do not let it go out of your hands. I shall not have time to write to the rest of my friends; they must not think hardly of me; I could only repeat what I have here written, and I think it is best to have the whole budget together; besides, Abby writes to all her acquaintance, which must answer for me. Remember me to them all; first, to my dear and aged parent,<sup>1</sup> to whom present my duty; to Dr. Tufts, to my aunt, to uncle Quincy, to Mr. Wibird, to all my friends and neighbours.

Sunday morning, 25 July.

I went yesterday, accompanied by Mr. Storer and Mr. Smith, to Mr. Copley's, to see Mr. Adams's picture.<sup>2</sup> This, I am told, was taken at the request of Mr. Copley, and belongs to him. It is a full-length picture, very large, and a very good likeness. Before him stands the globe; in his hand a map of Europe; at a small distance, two female figures, representing Peace and Innocence. It is a most beautiful painting. From thence, we went to what is called Mr. Copley's exhibition. Here is the celebrated picture, representing the death of Lord Chatham in the House of Commons; his three sons around him, each with strong expressions of grief and agitation in his countenance. Every member is crowding around him with a mixture of

<sup>1</sup> The mother of Mr. Adams.

<sup>2</sup> This picture is now in possession of the University at Cambridge.

surprise and distress. I saw in this picture, what I have every day noticed since I came here, a strong likeness of some American or other; and I can scarcely persuade myself that I have not seen this person, that, and the other, before, their countenances appear so familiar to me, and so strongly mark our own descent. There was another painting, which struck me more than this. It is the death of Major Pierson, the particular account of which I enclose to you. I never saw painting more expressive than this. I looked upon it until I was faint; you can scarcely believe but you hear the groans of the sergeant, who is wounded, and holding the handkerchief to his side, whilst the blood streams over his hand. Grief, despair and terror are strongly marked, whilst he grows pale and faint with loss of blood. The officers are holding Major Pierson in their arms, who is mortally wounded, and the black servant has levelled his piece at the officer who killed him. The distress in the countenances of the women, who are flying, one of whom has a baby in her arms, is beautifully represented; but descriptions of these things give you but a faint resemblance of what in reality they are.

From thence I went to see the celebrated Mrs. Wright, Messrs. Storer and Smith accompanying us. Upon my entrance, (my name being sent up,) she ran to the door, and caught me by the hand; "Why, is it really and in truth Mrs. Adams? and that your daughter? Why, you dear soul you, how young you look. Well, I am glad to see you. All of you Americans? Well, I must kiss you all." Having passed the ceremony upon me and Abby, she runs to the gentlemen. "I make no distinction," says she, and gave them a hearty buss; from which we would all rather have been excused, for her appearance is quite the slattern. "I love everybody that comes from America," says she; "here," running to her desk, "is a card I had from Mr. Adams; I am quite proud of it; he came to see me, and made me a noble present. Dear creature, I design to have his head. There," says she, pointing to an old man and woman, who were sitting in one corner of the room, "are

my old father and mother; don't be ashamed of them because they look so. They were good folks;" (these were their figures in wax-work;) "they turned Quakers, and never would let their children eat meat, and that is the reason we were all so ingenious; you had heard of the ingenious Mrs. Wright in America, I suppose?" In this manner she ran on for half an hour. Her person and countenance resemble an old maiden in your neighbourhood, Nelly Penniman, except that one is neat, the other the queen of sluts, and her tongue runs like Unity Badlam's. There was an old clergyman sitting reading a paper in the middle of the room; and, though I went prepared to see strong representations of real life, I was effectually deceived in this figure for ten minutes, and was finally told that it was only wax. From Mrs. Wright's I returned to my hotel, dressed, and at four went to dine with Mrs. Hallowell. Mr. H. had in the morning been to see me, and Mr. Thomas Boylston, both of whom urged me to take up my lodgings with Mrs. Hallowell. I chose to decline, but went and dined with them. Here I found Parson Walter. We had a handsome dinner of salt fish, pea soup, boiled fowl and tongue, roast and fried lamb, with a pudding and fruit. This was a little in the Boston style. Messrs. Smith and Storer dined with us. Mr. Hallowell lives handsomely, but not in that splendor which he did in Boston.<sup>1</sup> On Sunday, I engaged to take a coach for the day, which is only twelve-and-sixpence sterling, and go to church at the Foundling Hospital. Messrs. Atkinson, Smith, and Storer with me.

Monday Morning.

Well, my dear sister, if you are not tired with following me, I will carry you to the Foundling Hospital, where I attended divine service yesterday morning. Really glad I was that I could, after so long an absence, again tread the courts of the Most High, and I hope I felt not unthankful for the mercies I had received.

<sup>1</sup> He was Comptroller of the Customs, under the British Government, in Boston.



This hospital is a large, elegant building, situated in a spot as airy, and much more beautiful than Boston Common. The chapel, which is upon the second floor, is as large as what is called the Old South with us. There is one row of galleries : upon the floor of this chapel there are rows of seats like Concert Hall, and the pulpit is a small ornamented box, near the centre. There were about two thousand persons, as near as I could guess, who attended. In the gallery, opposite to where I sat, was the organ loft ; upon each side an alcove, with seats, which run up like a pyramid. Here the foundlings sat, upon one side the boys, upon the other the girls, all in uniform ; none appeared under five, nor any older than twelve. About three hundred attended the service. The uniform of the boys was a brown cloth, with a red collar, and a red stripe upon the shoulder. The girls were in brown, with a red girdle round the waist, a checked stomacher and apron ; sleeves turned up, and white cloth caps with a narrow lace, clean and neat as wax ; their governesses attended with them. They performed the vocal music ; one man and woman upon each side the organ, who sung an anthem ; both blind, and educated at this foundling hospital. When we came down, we went into the dining-rooms, which were upon each side of the ascent into the chapel ; here the tables were all arranged, and the little creatures curtsying and smiling ; some as sweet children as ever you saw. There is an inscription over the door, in gold letters ; " Can a mother forget her sucking child," &c. In a hall are placed the pictures of many noted benefactors and founders of this institution. (I should have mentioned that the chapel windows are painted glass ; the arms and names of the most distinguished benefactors are in the different squares of the glass.) We were shown into their bed-chambers, which are long, airy chambers, with ten or fifteen windows in each, and about fifty or sixty beds, placed in rows upon each side, covered with blue and white furniture check. At the head of the chamber is a bed for the governess. When you have seen one of them, you have a specimen of the whole.

I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson, in company with Messrs. Jackson, Smith, &c. Mr. Atkinson is a very modest worthy man, and Mrs. Atkinson a most amiable woman. You see no parade, no ceremony. I am treated with all the kindness of a sister, in as easy a way as I could wish. As I took the carriage for the day, after forenoon service, we rode out to see Mrs. Atkinson's twins, who are at nurse at Islington, about two miles from the city. It is a fine ride. We went through a number of the great squares. Portland Square is one of the finest. In short, the representations, which you and I amused ourselves with looking at not long ago, are very near the life. When we returned, we dined, and at six o'clock went to the Magdalen Hospital, which is three miles from where I dined; for this is a *monstrous* great city. We were admitted with a ticket. This assembly was very full and crowded. Yet no children or servants are admitted. In short, I begin to hope that this people are more serious and religious than I feared they were. There is great decorum and decency observed. Here are only two small galleries, which hold the unhappy beings who are the subjects of this merciful institution. Those who attend the service are placed upon seats below, like Concert Hall. The building is about as large again as Braintree church, in a most delightful situation, surrounded by weeping willows. All the public buildings here have large open spaces around them, except those churches which are in the heart of the city. I observed, upon going in, a gallery before me, raised very high, and covered with green canvass. Here sat these unhappy women, screened from public view. You can discern them through the canvass, but not enough to distinguish countenances. I admired the delicacy of this thought. The singing was all performed by these females, accompanied with the organ; the melancholy melody of their voices, the solemn sound of the organ, the serious and affecting discourse of the preacher, together with the humiliating objects before me, drew tears from my eyes. The chapel to these apartments is always in the heart of the building; the dining, working, and lodging apartments surround them.



Returned about eight o'clock ; found many cards left for me ; some from Virginians, some from Marylanders, some from Connecticut. Colonel Trumbull has called twice upon me, but I was so unfortunate as not to be at home. Amongst the Americans who called yesterday to see me during my absence, was Mr. Joy. He left his name and direction, with a polite billet, inviting me to dine with him on Tuesday, if I was not engaged ; and if I was, the first day I was disengaged. I have replied to him that I will wait upon him on Wednesday. Invited by Mr. Murray to the play this evening ; declined going, in hopes my best friend will be here to attend me very soon ; besides, have no clothes yet which will do. No mail from Holland yet arrived ; the wind has been so contrary that two are now due. Dr. Clark, our constant and daily visiter, is just come in to drink tea with me. Messrs. Smith and Storer are here great part of the day. Captain Lyde did not get up the Channel until Sunday, so that I have no occasion to repent landing when I did ; contrary winds and bad weather prevented his coming up only with the tide ; his vessel, too, had like to have been sunk by a collier running foul of him. They did him a good deal of damage ; these are vessels that take pleasure in injuring others. He told me many dismal stories about coming up the Channel, which made me determined to land at any rate.

On Saturday, Mr. Elworthy called upon me, and tendered me any service I could wish for. I thanked him, but Messrs. Smith and Storer and Dr. Clark render any other assistance unnecessary, as any and all of them are ready and willing to oblige me. On Sunday morning, Mr. and Mrs. Elworthy came to see me. She is a very agreeable woman, and *looks like one of us*, that is, she had more of our American neatness about her than any lady I have seen ; for I am yet so impolite as not to be reconciled to the jaunty appearance and the elegant stoop. There is a rage of fashion which prevails here with despotic sway ; the color and kind of silk must be attended to, and the day for putting it on and off ; no fancy to be exercised, but it is the *fashion*, and that is



argument sufficient to put one in or out of countenance. I am coming on half-way. I breakfast at nine, and dine at three, when at home ; but I rise at six. I am not obliged to conform in that ; the other hours I am forced to submit to, upon account of company. This morning, Dr. Clark and Colonel Trumbull are to breakfast with me. I long for the hour, when I shall set off for the Hague, or see Mr. Adams here. I meet with so many acquaintances, that I shall feel loth to quit the city upon that account. There are no Americans in Holland, and the language will prevent any sociability but what I find in my own family ; but, having a house, garden, and servants at command, feeling at home will in some measure compensate for the rest. I have a journey of eighty miles to make, to Margate, before I can embark ; and, as soon as Mr. Jefferson arrives, I suppose we must go to France. I have not executed your orders with regard to satin, because, upon inquiry, I find you can buy cheaper with you. I have not found any thing, except shoes, that are lower ; such a satin as my black, you must give as much sterling for a yard, as I gave lawful money ; — no silks but lutestring, and those which are thinner, are worn at this season ; — mode cloaks, muslin and sarsnet, — gauze hats, bonnets, and ribbons, — every thing as light and thin as possible, — different gowns and skirts, — muslin skirts, flounced chintz, with borders white, with a trimming that looks like gartering ; — the silk, which is most in taste, is what is called “new-mown hay,” — the pattern I enclose ; and this part of the letter is for the tasty folks of my acquaintance. Mr. Smith brings home a specimen of the newest fashioned hats.

Tuesday Morning.

Determined to tarry at home to-day, and see company. Mr. Joy came in and spent an hour. He is the same pleasing man you formerly knew him ; that bashful diffidence is supplied by manly confidence, and acquaintance with the world has given ease and politeness to his manners. He really is quite the accomplished gentleman, bears a very

good character, has made a great deal of money, and married a Yorkshire lady of handsome fortune about three months since. He again repeated his invitation to me to dine with him, accompanied by Mr. Smith. To-morrow, I go. Many gentlemen have called upon me this forenoon, so that I have only time to dress before dinner, which I order at an earlier hour than the London fashion. At three is my hour, and breakfast at nine. I cannot dine earlier, because from nine till three I am subject to company. From the hours of three till five and six, I am generally alone, or only Mr. Smith, or Mr. Storer here, to whom I am never denied. The servant will frequently come and ask me if I am at home.

Wednesday.

I have walked out to-day, for the first time, and a jaunt Mr. Storer has led me. I shall not get the better of it for a week. The walking is very easy here, the sides of the street being wholly of flat stones; and the London ladies walk a great deal, and very fast. My walk out and in was only four miles; judge you then, what an effect it had upon me. I was engaged to dine out. I got home at one, but was obliged to lie upon the bed an hour, and have not recovered from it yet.

At four, I was obliged to go out. Mr. Joy lives three miles from where I lodge. The house in which he lives is very elegant, not large, but an air of taste and neatness is seen in every apartment. We were shown into the drawing-room, where he awaited us at the door, and introduced us to his lady and her sister. She is quite young, delicate as a lily, modest and diffident, not a London lady by any means. After we had dined, which was in company with five American gentlemen, we retired to the drawing-room, and there I talked off the lady's reserve, and she appeared agreeable. Her dress pleased me, and answered to the universal neatness of the apartments, furniture, and entertainment. It was a delicate blue and white copper-plate calico, with a blue lutestring skirt, flounced; a muslin apron

and handkerchief, which are much more worn than gauze ; her hair, a fine black, dressed without powder, with a fashionable cap, and straw ribbons upon her head and breast, with a green morocco slipper. Our dinner consisted of fried fish of a small kind, a boiled ham, a fillet of veal, a pair of roast ducks, an almond pudding, currants and gooseberries, which in this country are very fine. Painted muslin is much worn here ; a straw hat with a deep crown, lined, and a white, green, or any colored ribbon you choose. I returned, and found a number of cards left by gentlemen who had called during my absence. To-morrow I am invited to dine again with Mr. Atkinson and lady. I feel almost ashamed to go again, but, not being otherwise engaged, they insist upon it. It is a thanksgiving day for the peace. I design to hear Mr. Duché, who officiates at the Asylum or Orphan House.

Thursday.

I found myself so unwell, that I could not venture to-day into a crowded assembly. My walk yesterday gave me a pain in my head, and stiffened me so that I can scarcely move. Abby, too, has the London cold, which they say every body experiences, who comes here ; but Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson would not excuse my dining with them, and Charles came for us. We went and found the same friendly, hospitable attention, — nothing more on account of the day, — a neat, pretty dinner, consisting of two dishes and vegetables. After dinner returned the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Elworthy, who were very glad to see me. Mr. Elworthy carried us to Drapers' Hall. This is a magnificent building, belonging to a company of that people, to which is a most beautiful garden. To walk in some of these places, you would think yourself in a land of enchantment. It would just suit my dear Betsey's romantic fancy. Tell her I design very soon to write to her. It shall be a description of some pretty scene at the Hague ; and Lucy shall have a Parisian letter ; but, writing to one, I think I am writing to you all.



Friday.

To-day, my dear sister, I have determined upon tarrying at home, in hopes of seeing my son or his papa ; but, from a hint dropped by Mr. Murray, I rather think it will be my son, as political reasons will prevent Mr. Adams's journey here. Whilst I am writing, a servant in the family runs puffing in, as if he were really interested in the matter ; " Young Mr. Adams is come." " Where, where is he ?" we all cried out. " In the other house, Madam ; he stopped to get his hair dressed." Impatient enough I was ; yet, when he entered, we had so many strangers, that I drew back, not really believing my eyes, till he cried out, " O, my mamma and my dear sister ! " Nothing but the eyes, at first sight appeared what he once was. His appearance is that of a man, and in his countenance the most perfect good humor ; his conversation by no means denies his stature. I think you do not approve the word *feelings*, but I know not what to substitute in lieu, or even to describe mine. His sister, he says, he should have known in any part of the world.

Mr. Adams chooses I should come to the Hague and travel with him from thence ; and says it is the first journey he ever looked forward to with pleasure, since he came abroad. I wish to set out on Friday ; but, as we are obliged to purchase a carriage, and many other matters to do, Master John thinks we cannot go until the Tuesday after. In the meantime, I shall visit the curiosities of the city ; not feeling twenty years younger, as my best friend says he does, but feeling myself exceedingly matronly with a grown up son on one hand and daughter upon the other, and, were I not their mother, I would say a likelier pair you will seldom see in a summer's day. You must supply words where you find them wanting, and imagine what I have left unfinished, for my letter is swelled to such a bulk that I have not even time to peruse it. Mr. Smith goes to-morrow morning, and I must now close, requesting you to make the distribution of the little matters I send, as directed. Tell Dr. Tufts, my dear and valued uncle and friend, that I design to write to him by the next vessel.

Particularly remember me to uncle Quincy, to Mrs. Quincy and Nancy, and to all my dear Boston friends. Tell Mr. Storer, that Charles is very good to me, and that, walking with Abby, the other day, she was taken for his wife. Ask him if he consents. Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson treat me like a sister. I cannot find myself in a strange land. I shall experience this, when I get to a country the language of which I cannot speak. I sincerely wish the treaty might have been concerted here. I have a partiality for this country; but where my treasure is, there shall my heart go.

I know not when to close; you must write often to me, and get uncle Smith to cover to Mr. Atkinson; then, wherever I am, the letters will come safe.

Adieu, once more, my dear sister, and believe me  
Most affectionately yours.

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

London, 1 August, 1784.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

ENCLOSED is a tasty ribbon for you. I do not mean to forget my other dear cousin, but could not light upon one that altogether pleased me at the time. Your cousin John arrived here yesterday from the Hague, to my no small joy, I assure you; there is in his manners, behavior, and countenance, a strong resemblance to his papa. He is the same good-humored lad he formerly was; I look upon him, scarcely realizing that he belongs to me; yet I should be very loth any one else should lay claim to him. I hope the two dear boys whom I left behind will be equally comforts and blessings to their parents. Will you, my good girl, give them, from time to time, your sisterly advice and warning? In this way you can repay all the little services it was ever in my power to render you. Next to my own children are those of my dear sister's in my affection and

regard ; the personal merit of those who have arrived to years of maturity, needs not the ties of consanguinity to endear them to me.

Your cousin has written to you largely, I believe, for her pen has been employed ever since we left home, when she was able, on board ship, and when she could catch a moment's time, at home. Were you here I would introduce you to some very agreeable company, in particular to a Mr. Murray, a friend of your cousin John's, who is a student in the Temple, an American, who bears a very good character, is a young gentleman of polite manners, easy address, and real good sense, very chatty and sentimental, writes handsomely, and is really an accomplished youth. There are very few American ladies here, but gentlemen by the dozens ; and not a day passes but we have our share of them. As you know I am fond of sociability, you will suppose I do not look forward with the most pleasurable ideas, to my visit and residence in a country, the language of which I am a stranger to ; this is a real truth. I believe England should have been the last country for me to have visited, but I cannot be unhappy surrounded by my own family ; without it, no country would be pleasing. Some sweet delightful scenes I have beheld since I came here ; the situation of the Foundling Hospital would enchant you, Betsey ! I have wished for you, and longed to carry you with me to Drapers' Garden ; find these places, if you can amongst your pictures ; paint has very little heightened them, I assure you. I am going to-day to see Mr. West's paintings ; he is out of the city, but Mr. Trumbull is a pupil of his, and resides with him when in town ; he attends us, accompanied by Master Jack and Charley, who is not the least altered ; he does credit to his country, his family, and himself.

Your cousin received your letter last Thursday, while we were at dinner at Mr. Atkinson's. Mr. Elworthy brought it, who lives but a little distance from them ; you will receive your reward in the pleasure, the painful pleasure, I assure you, it gave us. I rose very early this morning, to



get an hour or two before breakfast, to write to one or two of my friends. I have only my wrapping gown on, and the clock warns me that company, which I expect, will be here before I am ready. Mr. Murray is to breakfast with us, and accompany us, by his desire, on this excursion; from Mr. West's, we are to visit the monuments of kings and queens in Westminster Abbey.

To my Germantown friends remember me; I design writing to them by the next opportunity. Adieu.

Most affectionately yours,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

TO MRS CRANCH.

Auteuil, distant from Paris four miles. }  
5 September, 1784. }

MY DEAR SISTER,

It is now the 5th of September, and I have been at this place more than a fortnight; but I have had so many matters to arrange, and so much to attend to, since I left London, that I have scarcely touched a pen. I am now vastly behindhand in many things which I could have wished to have written down and transmitted to my American friends, some of which would have amused, and others diverted them. But such a rapid succession of events, or rather occurrences, have been crowded into the last two months of my life, that I can scarcely recollect them, much less recount them in detail. There are so many of my friends, who have demands upon me, and who I fear will think me negligent, that I know not which to address first. Abby has had less care upon her, and therefore has been very attentive to her pen, and I hope will supply my deficiencies.

Auteuil is a village four miles distant from Paris, and one from Passy. The house we have taken is large, commodious, and agreeably situated, near the woods of Boulogne, which belong to the King, and which Mr. Adams

calls his park, for he walks an hour or two every day in them. The house is much larger than we have need of; upon occasion, forty beds may be made in it. I fancy it must be very cold in winter. There are few houses with the privilege which this enjoys, that of having the saloon, as it is called, the apartment where we receive company, upon the first floor. This room is very elegant, and about a third larger than General Warren's hall. The dining-room is upon the right hand, and the saloon upon the left, of the entry, which has large glass doors opposite to each other, one opening into the court, as they call it, the other into a large and beautiful garden. Out of the dining-room you pass through an entry into the kitchen, which is rather small for so large a house. In this entry are stairs which you ascend, at the top of which is a long gallery fronting the street, with six windows, and, opposite to each window, you open into the chambers which all look into the garden.

But with an expense of thirty thousand livres in looking-glasses, there is no table in the house better than an oak board, nor a carpet belonging to the house. The floors I abhor, made of red tiles in the shape of Mrs. Quincy's floor-cloth tiles. These floors will by no means bear water, so that the method of cleaning them is to have them waxed, and then a man-servant with foot brushes drives round your room dancing here and there like a Merry Andrew. This is calculated to take from your foot every atom of dirt, and leave the room in a few moments as he found it. The house must be exceedingly cold in winter. The dining-rooms, of which you make no other use, are laid with small stones, like the red tiles for shape and size. The servants' apartments are generally upon the first floor, and the stairs which you commonly have to ascend to get into the family apartments are so dirty, that I have been obliged to hold up my clothes, as though I was passing through a cow-yard.

I have been but little abroad. It is customary in this country for strangers to make the first visit. As I cannot speak the language, I think I should make rather an awkward figure. I have dined abroad several times with Mr.

Adams's particular friends, the Abbés, who are very polite and civil, three sensible and worthy men. The Abbé de Mably has lately published a book, which he has dedicated to Mr. Adams. This gentleman is nearly eighty years old; the Abbé Chalut, seventy-five; and Arnoux, about fifty, a fine, sprightly man, who takes great pleasure in obliging his friends. Their apartments were really nice. I have dined once at Dr. Franklin's, and once at Mr. Barclay's, our consul, who has a very agreeable woman for his wife, and where I feel like being with a friend. Mrs. Barclay has assisted me in my purchases, gone with me to different shops, &c. To-morrow I am to dine at Monsieur Grand's; but I have really felt so happy within doors, and am so pleasingly situated, that I have had little inclination to change the scene. I have not been to one public amusement as yet, not even the opera, though we have one very near us.

You may easily suppose I have been fully employed, beginning house-keeping anew, and arranging my family to our no small expense and trouble; for I have had bed-linen and table-linen to purchase and make, spoons and forks to get made of silver, three dozen of each, besides tea furniture, china for the table, servants to procure, &c. The expense of living abroad, I always supposed to be high, but my ideas were nowise adequate to the thing. I could have furnished myself in the town of Boston, with every thing I have, twenty or thirty per cent. cheaper than I have been able to do it here. Every thing which will bear the name of elegant, is imported from England, and, if you will have it, you must pay for it, duties and all. I cannot get a dozen handsome wine-glasses under three guineas, nor a pair of small decanters for less than a guinea and a half. The only gauze fit to wear is English, at a crown a yard; so that really a guinea goes no further than a copper with us. For this house, garden, stables, &c., we give two hundred guineas a year. Wood is two guineas and a half per cord; coal, six livres the basket of about two bushels; this article of firing, we calculate at one hundred guineas a year. The



difference between coming upon this negotiation to France and remaining at the Hague, where the house was already furnished at the expense of a thousand pounds sterling, will increase the expense here to six or seven hundred guineas ; at a time, too, when Congress have cut off five hundred guineas from what they have heretofore given. For our coachman and horses alone, (Mr. Adams purchased a coach in England,) we give fifteen guineas a month. It is the policy of this country to oblige you to a certain number of servants, and one will not touch what belongs to the business of another, though he or she has time enough to perform the whole. In the first place, there is a coachman who does not an individual thing but attend to the carriages and horses ; then the gardener, who has business enough ; then comes the cook ; then the *maître d'hôtel* ; his business is to purchase articles in the family, and oversee, that nobody cheats but himself ; a *valet de chambre*, — John serves in this capacity ; a *femme de chambre*, — Esther serves in this line, and is worth a dozen others ; a *coiffeuse*, — for this place, I have a French girl about nineteen, whom I have been upon the point of turning away, because Madame will not brush a chamber ; “ it is not de fashion, it is not her business.” I would not have kept her a day longer, but found, upon inquiry, that I could not better myself, and hair-dressing here is very expensive, unless you keep such a madam in the house. She sews tolerably well, so I make her as useful as I can. She is more particularly devoted to Mademoiselle. Esther diverted me yesterday evening, by telling me that she heard her go muttering by her chamber door after she had been assisting Abby in dressing. “ Ah, mon Dieu, 't is provoking,” — (she talks a little English.) — “ Why, what is the matter, Pauline, what is provoking ? ” — “ Why, Mademoiselle look so pretty, I, so mauvais.” There is another indispensable servant, who is called a *frotteur* ; his business is to rub the floors.

We have a servant who acts as *maître d'hôtel*, whom I like at present, and who is so very gracious as to act as footman too, to save the expense of another servant, upon

condition that we give him a gentleman's suit of clothes in lieu of a livery. Thus, with seven servants and hiring a charwoman upon occasion of company, we may possibly make out to keep house ; with less, we should be hooted at as ridiculous, and could not entertain any company. To tell this in our own country, would be considered as extravagance ; but would they send a person here in a public character to be a public jest ? At lodgings in Paris last year, during Mr. Adams's negotiation for a peace, it was as expensive to him as it is now at house-keeping, without half the accommodations.

Washing is another expensive article ; the servants are all allowed theirs, besides their wages ; our own costs us a guinea a week. I have become steward and book-keeper, determined to know with accuracy what our expenses are, and to prevail with Mr. Adams to return to America, if he finds himself straitened, as I think he must be. Mr. Jay went home because he could not support his family here with the whole salary ; what then can be done, curtailed as it now is, with the additional expense ? Mr. Adams is determined to keep as little company as he possibly can, but some entertainments we must make, and it is no unusual thing for them to amount to fifty or sixty guineas at a time. More is to be performed by way of negotiation, many times, at one of these entertainments, than at twenty serious conversations ; but the policy of our country has been, and still is, to be penny-wise and pound-foolish. We stand in sufficient need of economy, and, in the curtailment of other salaries, I suppose they thought it absolutely necessary to cut off their foreign ministers. But, my own interest apart, the system is bad ; for that nation which degrades their own ministers by obliging them to live in narrow circumstances, cannot expect to be held in high estimation themselves. We spend no evenings abroad, make no suppers, attend very few public entertainments, or spectacles, as they are called, and avoid every expense that is not held indispensable. Yet I cannot but think it hard, that a gentleman who has devoted so great a part of his life to the service of the



public, who has been the means, in a great measure, of procuring such extensive territories to his country, who saved their fisheries, and who is still laboring to procure them further advantages, should find it necessary so cautiously to calculate his pence, for fear of overrunning them. I will add one more expense. There is now a Court mourning, and every foreign minister, with his family, must go into mourning for a Prince of eight years old, whose father is an ally to the King of France. This mourning is ordered by the Court, and is to be worn eleven days only. Poor Mr. Jefferson had to hie away for a tailor to get a whole black silk suit made up in two days; and at the end of eleven days, should another death happen, he will be obliged to have a new suit of mourning, of cloth, because that is the season when silk must be left off. We may groan and scold, but these are expenses which cannot be avoided; for fashion is the deity every one worships in this country, and, from the highest to the lowest, you must submit. Even poor John and Esther had no comfort amongst the servants, being constantly the subjects of their ridicule, until we were obliged to direct them to have their hair dressed. Esther had several crying fits upon the occasion, that she should be forced to be so much of a fool; but there was no way to keep them from being trampled upon but this; and, now that they are *à la mode de Paris*, they are much respected. To be out of fashion is more criminal than to be seen in a state of nature, to which the Parisians are not averse.

Sunday here bears the nearest resemblance to our Commencement, and Election days; every thing is jollity, and mirth, and recreation. But, to quit these subjects, pray tell me how you all do. I long to hear from you. House and garden, with all its decorations, are not so dear to me as my own little cottage, connected with the society I used there to enjoy; for, out of my own family, I have no attachments in Europe, nor do I think I ever shall have. As to the language, I speak it a little, bad grammar and all; but I have so many French servants, that I am under a necessity of trying.



Could you, my sister, and my dear cousins, come and see me as you used to do, walk in the garden and delight yourselves in the alcoves and arbours, I should enjoy myself much better. When Mr. Adams is absent, I sit in my little writing room, or the chamber I have described to Betsey, and read or sew. Abby is forever at her pen, writing or learning French; sometimes company, and sometimes abroad, we are fully employed.

Who do you think dined with us the other day? A Mr. Mather and his lady, son of Dr. Mather, and Mrs. Hay, who have come to spend the winter in France. I regret that they are going to some of the provinces. To-day, Mr. Tracy, Mr. Williams, Mr. Jefferson, and Colonel Humphreys are to dine with us; and one day last week we had a company of twenty-seven persons; Dr. Franklin, Mr. Hartley and his secretaries, &c. &c. But my paper warns me to close. Do not let anybody complain of me. I am going on writing to one after another as fast as possible, and, if this vessel does not carry the letters, the next will. Give my love to one of the best men in the world.

Affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, Sept. 5, 1784.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

I AM situated at a small desk in an apartment about two thirds as large as your own little chamber; this apartment opens into my lodging chamber, which is handsome and commodious, and is upon a range with six or seven others, all of which look into the garden. My chamber is hung with a rich India patch, the bed, chairs and window curtains of the same, which is very fashionable in this country. Two handsome bureaus with marble tops make up the furniture, which wants only the addition of a carpet to give it all an air of elegance; but in lieu of this is a tile floor in

the shape of Mrs. Quincy's carpet, with the red much worn off and defaced, the dust of which you may suppose not very favorable to a long train; but since I came we have been at the expense of having several of the floors new painted; this is done with Spanish-brown and glue, afterwards with melted wax and then rubbed with a hard brush, upon which a man sets his foot and with his arms akimbo, stripped to his shirt, goes driving round your room. This man is called a *frotteur*, and is a servant kept on purpose for the business. There are some floors of wood which resemble our black walnut; these are made of small strips of wood about six inches wide, and placed in squares, which are rubbed with wax and brushes in the same manner I have before described. Water is an article very sparingly used. I procured a woman when I first came, (for the house was excessively dirty) to assist Esther in cleaning. I desired her to wash up the dining-room floor, which is of stone made in the same shape of the tile, so she turned a pail of water down and took a house brush and swept it out. You would think yourself poisoned until time reconciled you to it. I have, however, got this place to look more like neatness than any thing I have yet seen. What a contrast this to the Hague! The garden, Betsey! let me take a look at it; it is delightful, such a beautiful collection of flowers all in bloom, so sweetly arranged with rows of orange-trees and china vases of flowers; why you would be in raptures! It is square and contains about five acres of land. About a third of the garden is laid out in oblongs, octagons, circles, &c., filled with flowers; upon each side are spacious walks, with rows of orange trees and pots of flowers, then a small walk and a wall covered with grape vines; in the middle of the garden a fountain of water, in a circle walled about two feet, and a thin circle of fence painted green, in the midst of which are two little images carved in stone; upon each side and at a proper distance are two small alcoves filled with curious plants, exotics, and around these are placed pots of flowers, which have a most agreeable appearance; then a small open Chinese fence, covered with

grape vines and wall fruit, encloses two spots upon each side, containing vegetables surrounded by orange trees which prevent your view of them until you walk to them. At the bottom of the garden are a number of trees, the branches of which unite and form beautiful arbours: the tops of the trees are cut all even enough to walk upon them, and look, as I sit now at the window, like one continued tree through the whole range. There is a little summer-house covered by this thicket, beautiful in ruins; two large alcoves, in which are two statues, terminate the vines; the windows of all the apartments in the house, or rather glass doors, reaching from the top to the bottom and opening in the middle, give one a full and extensive view of the garden. This is a beautiful climate, soft, serene, and temperate; but *Paris*, you must not ask me how I like it, because I am going to tell you of the pretty little apartment next to this in which I am writing. Why, my dear, you cannot turn yourself in it without being multiplied twenty times; now that I do not like, for being rather clumsy, and by no means an elegant figure, I hate to have it so often repeated to me. This room is about ten or twelve feet large, is eight-cornered and panelled with looking-glasses; a red and white India patch, with pretty borders encompasses it; low back stuffed chairs with garlands of flowers encircling them, adorn this little chamber; festoons of flowers are round all the glasses; a lustre hangs from the ceiling adorned with flowers; a beautiful sofa is placed in a kind of alcove, with pillows and cushions in abundance, the use of which I have not yet investigated; in the top of this alcove, over the sofa in the ceiling is another glass; here is a beautiful chimney-piece, with an elegant painting of rural life in a country farm-house, lads and lasses jovial and happy. This little apartment opens into your cousin's bed-chamber; it has a most pleasing view of the garden, and it is that view which always brings my dear Betsey to my mind, and makes me long for her to enjoy the delights of it with me. In this apartment I sit and sew, while your uncle is engaged at Passy, where the present negotiations are carried on, and your cousin



John in his apartment translating Latin, your cousin Abby in her chamber writing, in which she employs most of her time. She has been twice to the Opera with her brother, of which, I suppose, she will write you an account. The present owner of this house, and the builder of it, is a M. le Comte de Rouhaut; he married young, a widow worth 1,800,000 livres per annum, £80,000 sterling, which in the course of a few years they so effectually dissipated, that they had not £100,000 sterling remaining; they have been since that separated; by some inheritances and legacies the Count is now worth about a hundred thousand livres per annum, and the Countess seventy-five thousand. They have a theatre in this house now gone to decay, where for eight years together they played comedies and tragedies, twice a week, and gave entertainments at the same time, which cost them £200 sterling every time they entertained between four and five hundred persons at a time. The looking-glasses in this house, I have been informed, cost 300,000 livres. Under this chamber which I have described to you, is a room of the same bigness, in which is an elegant bathing convenience let into the floor, and this room is encompassed with more glass than the chamber, the ceiling being entirely of glass; here, too, is a sofa surrounded with curtains. Luxury and folly are strong, and characteristic traits of the builder. There are apartments of every kind in this house, many of which I have never yet entered; those for which I have a use are calculated for the ordinary purposes of life, and further I seek not to know.

Write to me, my dear girl, and tell me every thing about my dear friends and country. Remember me to your brother, to your sister. I will write to Mr. T. I hope to be able to send at least a few lines. It is very expensive sending letters by the post. I must look for private opportunities to London. Adieu. I hear the carriage. Your uncle is come. I go to hasten tea, of which he is still fond.

Yours sincerely,

A. A.

## TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

Auteuil, 5 September, 1784.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I PROMISED to write to you from the Hague, but your uncle's unexpected arrival at London prevented me. Your uncle purchased an excellent travelling coach in London, and hired a post-chaise for our servants. In this manner we travelled from London to Dover, accommodated through England with the best of horses, postilions, and good carriages; clean, neat apartments, genteel entertainment, and prompt attendance. But no sooner do you cross from Dover to Calais, than every thing is reversed, and yet the distance is very small between them.

The cultivation is by no means equal to that of England; the villages look poor and mean, the houses all thatched, and rarely a glass window in them; their horses, instead of being handsomely harnessed, as those in England are, have the appearance of so many old cart-horses. Along you go, with seven horses tied up with ropes and chains, rattling like trucks; two ragged postilions, mounted, with enormous jack boots, add to the comic scene. And this is the style in which a duke or a count travels through this kingdom. You inquire of me how I like Paris. Why, they tell me I am no judge, for that I have not seen it yet. One thing, I know, and that is that I have smelt it. If I was agreeably disappointed in London, I am as much disappointed in Paris. It is the very dirtiest place I ever saw. There are some buildings and some squares, which are tolerable; but in general the streets are narrow, the shops, the houses, inelegant and dirty, the streets full of lumber and stone, with which they build. Boston cannot boast so elegant public buildings; but, in every other respect, it is as much superior in my eyes to Paris, as London is to Boston. To have had Paris tolerable to me, I should not have gone to London. As to the people here, they are more given to hospitality than in England it

is said. I have been in company with but one French lady since I arrived ; for strangers here make the first visit, and nobody will know you until you have waited upon them in form.

This lady<sup>1</sup> I dined with at Dr. Franklin's. She entered the room with a careless, jaunty air ; upon seeing ladies who were strangers to her, she bawled out, " Ah ! mon Dieu, where is Franklin ? Why did you not tell me there were ladies here ? " You must suppose her speaking all this in French. " How I look ! " said she, taking hold of a chemise made of tiffany, which she had on over a blue lute-string, and which looked as much upon the decay as her beauty, for she was once a handsome woman ; her hair was frizzled ; over it she had a small straw hat, with a dirty gauze half-handkerchief round it, and a bit of dirtier gauze, than ever my maids wore, was bowed on behind. She had a black gauze scarf thrown over her shoulders. She ran out of the room ; when she returned, the Doctor entered at one door, she at the other ; upon which she ran forward to him, caught him by the hand, " Helas ! Franklin ; " then gave him a double kiss, one upon each cheek, and another upon his forehead. When we went into the room to dine, she was placed between the Doctor and Mr. Adams. She carried on the chief of the conversation at dinner, frequently locking her hand into the Doctor's, and sometimes spreading her arms upon the backs of both the gentlemen's chairs, then throwing her arm carelessly upon the Doctor's neck.

I should have been greatly astonished at this conduct, if the good Doctor had not told me that in this lady I should see a genuine Frenchwoman, wholly free from affectation or stiffness of behaviour, and one of the best women in the world. For this I must take the Doctor's word ; but I should have set her down for a very bad one, although sixty years of age, and a widow. I own I was highly disgusted,

<sup>1</sup> This lady was Madame Helvétius, widow of the philosopher who had resided at Auteuil. See Mr. Sparks's edition of Franklin's Works, vol. x. p. 317.



and never wish for an acquaintance with any ladies of this cast. After dinner she threw herself upon a settee, where she showed more than her feet. She had a little lap-dog,<sup>1</sup> who was, next to the Doctor, her favorite. This she kissed, and when he wet the floor, she wiped it up with her chemise. This is one of the Doctor's most intimate friends, with whom he dines once every week, and she with him. She is rich, and is my near neighbour; but I have not yet visited her. Thus you see, my dear, that manners differ exceedingly in different countries. I hope, however, to find amongst the French ladies manners more consistent with my ideas of decency, or I shall be a mere recluse.

You must write to me, and let me know all about you; marriages, births, and preferments; every thing you can think of. Give my respects to the Germantown family. I shall begin to get letters for them by the next vessel.

Good night. Believe me

Your most affectionate aunt,

A. A.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

Auteuil, near Paris, 5 September, 1784.

ALTHOUGH I have not yet written to you, be assured, Madam, you have been the subject of some of my most pleasing thoughts. The sweet communion we have often had together, and the pleasant hours I have passed both at Milton and Braintree, I have not realized in Europe. I visit and am visited, but not being able to converse in the language of the country, I can only silently observe manners and men. I have been here so little while, that it would be improper for me to pass sentence or form judgments of a people from a converse of so short duration. This I may, however, say with truth, that their manners are totally dif-

<sup>1</sup> Franklin's Works, edited by Mr. Sparks, vol. ii. 213.

ferent from those of our own country. If you ask me what is the business of life here ? I answer, pleasure. The beau monde, you reply. Ay, Madam, from the throne to the footstool it is the science of every being in Paris and its environs. It is a matter of great speculation to me when these people labor. I am persuaded the greater part of those who crowd the streets, the public walks, the theatres, the spectacles, as they term them, must subsist upon bread and water. In London the streets are also full of people, but their dress, their gait, every appearance indicates business, except on Sundays, when every person devotes the day, either at church or in walking, as is most agreeable to his fancy. But here, from the gaiety of the dress and the places they frequent, I judge pleasure is the business of life. We have no days with us, or rather in our country, by which I can give you an idea of the Sabbath here, except commencement and election. Paris upon that day pours forth all her citizens into the environs for the purposes of recreation. We have a beautiful wood cut into walks within a few rods of our dwelling, which, upon this day, resounds with music and dancing, jollity and mirth of every kind. In this wood booths are erected, where cake, fruit, and wine are sold. Here milliners repair with their gauzes, ribbons, and many other articles, in the peddling style, but for other purposes I imagine than the mere sale of their merchandise. But every thing here is a subject of merchandise.

I believe this nation is the only one in the world which could make pleasure the business of life, and yet retain such a relish for it as never to complain of its being tasteless or insipid ; the Parisians seem to have exhausted nature and art in this science, and to be “triste” is a complaint of a most serious nature. In the family of Monsieur Grand, who is a Protestant, I have seen a decorum and decency of manners, a conjugal and family affection, which are rarely found, where separate apartments, separate pleasures and amusements show the world that nothing but the name is united. But whilst absolutions are held in estimation, and

pleasure can be bought and sold, what restraint have mankind upon their appetites and passions? There are few of them left in a neighboring country amongst the beau monde, even where dispensations are not practised. Which of the two countries can you form the most favorable opinion of, and which is the least pernicious to the morals? That where vice is licensed; or where it is suffered to walk at large, soliciting the unwary and unguarded, as it is to a most astonishing height in the streets of London, and where virtuous females are frequently subject to insults. In Paris no such thing happens; but the greatest decency and respect is shown by all orders to the female character. The stage is in London made use of as a vehicle to corrupt the morals. In Paris no such thing is permitted. They are too polite to wound the ear. In one country vice is like a ferocious beast, seeking whom it may devour; in the other like a subtle poison, secretly penetrating and working destruction. In one country, you cannot travel a mile without danger to your person and property, yet public executions abound; in the other, your person and property are safe; executions are very rare, but in a *lawful way, beware*; for with whomsoever you have to deal, you may rely upon an attempt to overreach you. In the graces of motion and action this people shine unrivalled. The theatres exhibit to me the most pleasing amusement I have yet found. The little knowledge I have of the language enables me to judge here, and the actions, to quote an old phrase, speak louder than words. I was the other evening at what is called the French Theatre (to distinguish it from several others,) it being the only one upon which tragedies are acted. Here I saw a piece of the celebrated Racine, a sacred drama, called Athalia. The dresses were superb, the house elegant and beautiful, the actors beyond the reach of my pen. The character of the high priest admirably well supported; and Athalia would have shone as Sophonisba or Lady Macbeth, if the term *shine* may be applied to a character full of cruelty and horror. To these public spectacles (and to every other amusement) you may go with perfect security to your



person and property. Decency and good order are preserved, yet are they equally crowded with those of London; but in London, at going in and coming out of the theatre, you find yourself in a mob, and are every moment in danger of being robbed. In short, the term John Bull, which Swift formerly gave to the English nation, is still very applicable to their manners. The cleanliness of Britain, joined to the civility and politeness of France, could make a most agreeable assemblage. You will smile at my choice, but as I am likely to reside some time in this country, why should I not wish them the article in which they are most deficient?

It is the established custom of this country for strangers to make the first visit. Not speaking the language lays me under embarrassments. For to visit a lady merely to bow to her is painful, especially where they are so fond of conversing as the ladies here generally are; so that my female acquaintance is rather confined as yet, and my residence four miles from Paris will make it still more so. There are four American ladies who have visited me, — Mrs. Barclay, with whom I have a friendship, and whom I can call upon at all times without ceremony, and who is an excellent lady; a Mrs. Price, a Canadian lady; Mrs. Valnais, and Mrs. Bingham. Mrs. Bingham is a very young lady, not more than twenty, very agreeable, and very handsome; rather too much given to the foibles of the country for the mother of two children, which she already is.

As to politics, madam, the world is at peace, and I have wholly done with them. Your good husband and mine would speculate upon treaties of commerce, could they spend their evenings together, as I sincerely wish they could, or upon what they love better, agriculture and husbandry, which is become full as necessary for our country. This same surly John Bull is kicking up the dust and growling, looking upon the fat pastures he has lost, with a malicious and envious eye; and though he is offered admission upon decent terms, he is so mortified and stomachful, that, although he longs for a morsel, he has not yet agreed for a single bite.

This village of Auteuil, where we reside, is four miles from Paris, and one from Passy ; — a very pretty summer retreat, but not so well calculated for winter. I fear it will prove as cold as Milton Hill. If I was to judge of the winters here by what I have experienced of the fall, I should think they were equally severe as with us. We begin already to find fires necessary.

During the little time I was in England, I saw more of the curiosities of London than I have yet seen of Paris ; so that I am not able to give you any account of any public buildings or amusements, except the theatres, of which I shall grow very fond as soon as I am mistress enough of the language to comprehend all the beauties of it. There are three theatres in Paris constantly open, but that upon which tragedies are acted is the most pleasing to me. Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Molière are very frequently given here ; upon the stage the best pronunciation is to be acquired. There is a Mrs. Siddons in London, who is said to be the female Garrick of the present day. I had not the happiness to see her when I was in London, as she was then in Ireland ; but I saw no actors upon their stage which by any means equal those which I have met with here. The people of this country keep up their intercourse with each other by dining together, after which they repair to the theatres and to the public walks.

I sigh (though not allowed) for my social tea parties which I left in America, and the friendship of my chosen few. Their agreeable converse would be a rich repast to me, could I transplant them round me in the village of Auteuil, with my habits, tastes, and sentiments, which are too firmly riveted to change with change of country or climate ; and at my age, the greatest of my enjoyments consists in the reciprocation of friendship.

How is my good friend Charles ? finely recovered, I hope. I do not despair of seeing him here ; and at this house he may be assured of a welcome, whenever he wishes to try the air of France. Gay Harry, has he got any more flesh and health ? Grave Mr. George is well, I hope, and fixed

in some business to his mind. Let not my esteemed friend, the eldest of the brothers, think I have forgotten or neglected him by naming him last. His tenderness for his brothers, and his better health, will excuse me if I have been guilty of a breach of order. He will accept my good wishes for his health and prosperity without regard to place. Shall I ask General Warren how farming and husbandry flourish? I thought often of him, and the delight he would have received in a journey from Deal to London. The rich variety of grass and grain with which that country was loaded, as I rode through it, exhibited a prospect of the highest cultivation. All nature looked like a garden. The villages around Paris are pleasant, but neither the land nor the cultivation equals the neighboring nation.

When you see our good friend Madam Winthrop, be pleased to make my regards to her. You will also remember me to your neighbors at the foot of the hill; and let me hear from you by every opportunity, as the correspondence of my friends is the only compensation I am to receive for the loss of their society. Is Polly married? Happiness attend her and her partner if she is. To Mr. and Mrs. Otis, to one and all of my dear friends, be kind enough to remember me. The truth of one maxim of Rochefoucault I experience, that absence heightens, rather than diminishes, those affections which are strong and sincere.

12 December.

You will see, my dear Madam, by the date of the above, that my letter has lain by long, waiting a private conveyance. Mr. Tracy and Mr. Jackson design to return to London this week, and I shall request the favor of them to take charge of it. Since it was written there have been some changes in the political world, and the emperor has recalled his ambassador from the United Provinces. Every thing seems to wear a hostile appearance. The Dutch are not in the least intimidated, but are determined at all events to refuse the opening of the Scheldt to the emperor. This court is endeavoring to mediate between the emperor and



the Dutch. When the affair was to be debated in the king's council, the queen said to the Count de Vergennes, "M. le Comte, you must remember that the emperor is my brother." "I certainly shall, Madam," replied the Count; "but your majesty will remember that you are queen of France."

Thus much for Politics. You ask about treaties of Commerce. Courts like ladies stand upon punctilios and choose to be addressed upon their own ground. I am not at liberty to say more.

This is the 12th of December and we have got an American snow storm; the climate is not so pleasant as I expected to find it. I love the cheerful sunshine of America and the clear blue sky. Adieu, my dear Madam, I have so much writing to do that I am, though unwillingly, obliged to close, requesting my son to copy for me. You will not fail writing soon to your friend and humble servant.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 3 December, 1784.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

I HAD, my dear girl, such an obliging visit from you last night, and such sweet communion with you that it has really overcome the reluctance which I have for my pen, and induced me to take it up, to tell you that my night was more to my taste than the day, although that was spent in the company of Ambassadors, Barons, &c., and was one of the most agreeable parties we have yet entertained. I do not recollect that I once mentioned to you, during all your visit, the company of the day, nor any thing respecting the customs and habits of the country where I reside. I was wholly wrapt up in inquiries after those friends who are much dearer to me, and who are bound faster to my heart, I think, for being separated from them. And now my dear girl I have told you a truth respecting the pleasure your company afford-

ed me, and the pleasing account you gave me, of our own dear friends and country. I suppose your curiosity is a little raised with respect to the company I mentioned. I could write you an account every week of what I dare say would amuse you, but I fear to take my pen, lest I should give it a scope that would be very improper for the public character with whom I am connected, and the country where I reside. It is necessary in this country for a gentleman in a public character to entertain company once a week, and to have a feast in the style of the country. As your uncle had been invited to dine at the tables of many of the Foreign Ministers who reside here, it became necessary to return the civility, by at least giving them as good dinners; though it would take two years of an American Minister's salary to furnish the equipage of plate which you will find upon the tables of all the foreign Ministers here. M. l'Ambassadeur de Suede, was invited together with Mr. D'Asp, the Secretary of Legation, the Baron de Geer and the Baron de Waltersdorff, two very agreeable young noblemen who speak English. The Swedish Ambassador is a well made, genteel man, very polite and affable, about thirty years old. Mr. Jefferson and Dr. Franklin were both invited, but were too sick to come out. Colonel Humphreys, Secretary to the American embassy, and Mr. Short, private Secretary to Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Tracy, Mr. and Mrs. Bingham and Dr. Bancroft, and Chevalier Jones, made up the company. Colonel Humphreys is from Connecticut, a dark complexioned, stout, well-made, warlike looking gentleman of about thirty years old; you may read in his face industry, probity and good sense. Mr. Short is a younger man; he is but just arrived from Virginia; appears to be modest and soft in his manners. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Tracy you know. Dr. Bancroft is a native of America; he may be thirty or forty years old. His first appearance is not agreeable, but he has a smile which is of vast advantage to his features, enlightening them and dispelling the scowl which appears upon his brow. He is pleasant and entertaining in conversation; a man of literature and good sense; you know he is said to be the author

of Charles Wentworth. Chevalier Jones you have heard much of; he is a most uncommon character. I dare say you would be as much disappointed in him as I was. From the intrepid character he justly supported in the American Navy, I expected to have seen a rough, stout, warlike Roman,—instead of that I should sooner think of wrapping him up in cotton wool, and putting him into my pocket, than sending him to contend with cannon-balls. He is small of stature, well proportioned, soft in his speech, easy in his address, polite in his manners, vastly civil, understands all the etiquette of a lady's toilette, as perfectly as he does the mast, sails and rigging of his ship. Under all this appearance of softness he is bold, enterprising, ambitious and active. He has been here often, and dined with us several times; he is said to be a man of gallantry and a favorite amongst the French ladies, whom he is frequently commending for the neatness of their persons, their easy manners and their taste in dress. He knows how often the ladies use the baths, what color best suits a lady's complexion, what cosmetics are most favorable to the skin. We do not often see the warrior and the *Abigail* thus united. Mr. and Mrs. Bingham bring up the rear, both of whom are natives of America. He is about twenty five and she, twenty. He is said to be rich and to have an income of four thousand a year. He married this lady at sixteen. She is a daughter of Mr. Willing, of Philadelphia. They have two little girls now with them, and have been travelling in England, Holland and France. Here they mean to pass the winter in the gayeties and amusements of Paris; 't is said he wishes for an appointment here as foreign Minister; he lives at a much greater expense than any American Minister can afford to do. Mrs. Bingham is a fine figure and a beautiful person; her manners are easy and affable, but she was too young to come abroad without a pilot, gives too much into the follies of this country, has money enough and knows how to lavish it with an unsparing hand. Less money and more years may make her wiser, but she is so handsome she must be pardoned. Mr. and Mrs. Church are here too, alias Carter. Mrs. Church



is a delicate little woman : as to him, his character is enough known in America.

13 December.

Since writing the above, I have had the pleasure of receiving your obliging letter of 26 September. I believe I wrote you a letter of nearly the same date, in which I think I must have satisfied some of your particular inquiries respecting house, gardens and apartments, and if it will be any satisfaction to you to know where this letter is written, I will tell you, in your cousin John's chamber ; he is writing at his desk, and I at a table by the fire. It is customary in this country to live upon the second floor ; there are a row of chambers the length of the house, which all look into the garden. In the first, which makes one corner of the house, I am now writing ; it is lined in the same manner as if it was paper, with a blue and white chintz ; the bed curtains, window curtains, and chairs of the same. A marble mantletree, over which is a looking-glass, in the fashion of the country, which are all fixed into the walls, it is about four feet wide and five long ; then there is between the windows a handsome bureau with a marble top, the draws gilt, like trimming them with a broad gold lace, and another looking-glass like that I have just mentioned. There is a little apartment belonging to this chamber, about as large as your library, which has a sofa of red and white copper-plate and six chairs of the same ; this too looks into the garden, and is a pretty summer apartment ; between this chamber and the next, is the staircase, upon the other side of which is the chamber in which we all associate together when we are not in our separate rooms ; this is properly your uncle's room, because there he writes and receives his forenoon company. This chamber has two large glasses and is furnished much in the same style with the one I have described, the furniture being red and white. Next to that is a chamber called an anti-chamber, papered with a blue and white paper, one glass only and

one window. Out of this you go into my lodging-chamber, which is large and furnished in the same style with the others, only that the figures are all Chinese, horrid looking creatures! Out of my chamber, all in the same row, is a little room for a dressing-room and one of the same kind next to it, which is in warm weather my writing-room, having two little book cases and a small escritoire; next to that is the delicious little apartment I formerly told you of, and then your cousin Abby's apartment which makes the other corner of the house. There are very clever apartments, up the second pair of stairs, over these chambers, but they are out of repair; there are two wings in which there are a number of chambers; in one of which Esther and Pauline keep, always having a fire to themselves. Who, say you, is Pauline? Why, she is your cousin's chamber-maid and our hair-dresser; every lady here must have a female hair-dresser, so these girls serve an apprenticeship to the business like any other trade, and give from five to eight guineas for their learning, then they are qualified to dress a lady, make her bed and sew a very little. I have, however, got this one to lay aside some of her airs and become a very clever girl. Whilst Esther was sick she was as kind to her and as careful as if she was her sister, watching with her night after night; the cook, too, upon this occasion was very kind; and Pauline has undertaken to teach Esther to dress hair, which will be a vast advantage to me, if, as I fear, I shall be obliged to go away this winter; it is very unpleasant to break up a house, to part with one's servants, and to set all afloat, not knowing where your next residence will be.

What a letter, this! I hope it is sufficiently particular to satisfy all your curiosity, but do not show it as a specimen of Aunt A.'s abilities. Enter Miss Pauline—"Madame, vous allez faire mettre des papillottes à vos cheveux aujourd'hui? Il est midi, oui, je viens,"—so you see my pen must be laid aside for this important business. I commonly take a play of Voltaire or some other French book to read, or I should have no patience. The business being com-



pleted, I have a little advice to give you respecting the French language. You had begun to learn it before I left America. Your good papa, many years ago, gave me what is called a little smattering of it, but indolence and the apprehension that I could not read it without a preceptor, made me neglect it, but since I came here, I found I must read French or nothing ; your uncle, to interest me in it, procured for me Racine, Voltaire, Corneille, and Crebillon's plays, all of which are at times acted upon the French Theatre. I took my dictionary and applied myself to reading a play a day, by which means I have made considerable progress, making it a rule to write down every word which I was obliged to look out: translating a few lines every day into English, would be another considerable help, and as your papa so well understands the language he would assist in inspecting your translation ; by this means, and with the assistance of the books which you may find in the office, you will be able to read it well in a little while. Do you look in the office for Racine's Plays and Voltaire's, and engage in them ; I will answer for your improvement ; especially that volume of Voltaire which contains his *Zaire* and *Alzire* ; the latter is one of the best plays I ever read. There is a comedy of his called *Nanine*, which I saw acted. I wish, my dear, I could transport you in a balloon and carry you to the stages here ; you would be charmed and enchanted with the scenery, the music, the dresses, and the action. Another time I will describe to you all these theatres, at present I am shortened for time. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Tracy talk of going on Thursday, and say our letters must be ready. They will be out here to-morrow morning, and I have not written to more than half the friends I designed to. Give my love to cousin Lucy, and tell her she is indebted to me a letter. How is Aunt Tufts ? You did not say a word about her ; my duty to her. I will give her some account of some pretty place that it is probable I shall visit before long. Who is preaching at Weymouth ? Are they likely to settle any one ? How do Mr. and Mrs. Weld ? I had a visit from Mrs. Hay since I have



been here. She is in France, at a place called Beaugenci, about a hundred miles from Paris. I have had several letters from her and she was well about ten days ago. Let Mrs. Field know that Esther is very happy and contented, and that I have not been able (in France) to procure for her the small-pox, as I expected. She has not been exposed, living out of Paris, and in Paris it is not permitted to inoculate. I made inquiries about it of a physician. If I should go to London again, I shall there endeavour that she has it. She and my other chambermaid keep in a chamber by themselves, one of them makes the beds and the other sweeps the chambers, which is all they have to do in the stirring way, from Monday morning till Saturday night. When Esther was well, she undertook with Pauline to wash and doup my muslin and lawn, because they battered it to death here. She is cleverly now, although she had a severe turn for a week. John has not had very good health. He was sick soon after he came here, but is pretty smart now, and an honest good servant. John always waits upon me when I dine abroad, and tends behind my chair, as the fashion of this country is always to carry your servants with you; he looks very smart, with his livery, his bag, his ruffles, and his laced hat.

If possible, I will write to Germantown, but I neglect writing when I ought, and when I feel roused I have so much of it to do, that some one has cause to be offended at my neglect, and then, when I once begin, I never know when to come to that part which bids you adieu. The beginning and end I can always assure you of the affectionate regard of your aunt,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 9 December, 1784.

MY DEAR SISTER,

YOUR letter by way of Amsterdam had a quick passage,

and was matter of great pleasure to me. I thank you for all your kind and friendly communications, by which you carry my imagination back to my friends and acquaintance, who were never dearer to me than they now are, though so far distant from me.

I have really commiserated the unhappy refugees more than ever, and think no severer punishment need to be inflicted upon any mortals than that of banishment from their country and friends. Were it my case, I should pray for death and oblivion. The consolation which Bolingbroke comforted himself with would afford me little satisfaction; for, though the same heavens were spread over me and the same sun enlightened me, I should see the heavens covered with darkness, and the sun bereft of its splendor.

We reside here at this village, four miles distant from Paris. It is a very agreeable summer situation, but in winter I should prefer Paris, on many accounts; but upon none more than that of society. The Americans who are in France, and with whom I have any acquaintance, all reside in Paris; they would frequently fall in and spend an evening with us; but to come four miles, unless by particular invitation, is what they do not think of; so that our evenings, which are very long, are wholly by ourselves. You cannot wonder that we all long for the social friends whom we left in America, whose places are not to be supplied in Europe. I wish our worthy and sensible parson could visit us as he used to do in America; his society would be very precious to us here.

I go into Paris sometimes to the plays, of which I am very fond; but I so severely pay for it, that I refrain many times upon account of my health. It never fails giving me a severe headache, and that in proportion as the house is thin or crowded, one, two, or three days after. We make it a pretty general rule to entertain company once a week. (I do not call a transient friend or acquaintance dining, by that name.) Upon those occasions, our company consists of fifteen, eighteen, or twenty, which commonly costs us as many guineas as there are persons. You will naturally be

surprised at this, as I was when I first experienced it ; but my weekly bills, all of which pass through my hands, and are paid by me, convince me of it. Every American who comes into Paris, no matter from what State, makes his visit, and pays his respects, to the American ministers ; all of whom, in return, you must dine. Then there are the foreign ministers, from the different courts, who reside here, and some French gentlemen. In short, there is no end of the expense, which a person in a public character is obliged to be at. Yet our countrymen think their ministers are growing rich. Believe me, my dear sister, I am more anxious for my situation than I was before I came abroad. I then hoped that my husband, in his advanced years, would have been able to have laid up a little without toiling perpetually ; and, had I been with him from the first, he would have done it when the allowance of Congress was more liberal than it now is ; but cutting off five hundred [guineas] at one blow, and at the same time increasing our expenses, by removing us from place to place, is more than we are able to cope with, and I see no prospect but we must be losers at the end of the year. We are now cleverly situated. I have got a set of servants as good as I can expect to find ; such as I am pretty well satisfied with ; but I apprehend, that, in the month of January, we shall be obliged to give up our house, dismiss our servants, and make a journey to England. This is not yet fully agreed upon ; but, I suppose the next letters from the Court of England will determine it ; and this has been Mr. Adams's destiny ever since he came abroad. His health, which has suffered greatly in the repeated attacks of the fevers he has had, obliges him to live out of cities. You cannot procure genteel lodgings in Paris under twenty-five or thirty guineas a month ; which is much dearer than we give for this house, besides the comfort of having your family to yourself. When I speak of twenty-five and thirty guineas per month, not a mouthful of food is included.

As to speaking French, I make but little progress in that ; but I have acquired much more facility in reading it. My



acquaintance with French ladies is very small. The Marquise de la Fayette was in the country when I first came, and continued out until November. Immediately upon her coming into Paris, I called and paid my compliments to her. She is a very agreeable lady, and speaks English with tolerable ease. We sent our servant, as is the custom, with our names, into the house, to inquire if she was at home. We were informed that she was not. The carriage was just turning from the door, when a servant came running out to inform us that Madame would be glad to see us; upon which Mr. Adams carried me in and introduced me. The Marquise met me at the door, and with the freedom of an old acquaintance, and the rapture peculiar to the ladies of this nation, caught me by the hand and gave me a salute upon each cheek, most heartily rejoiced to see me. You would have supposed I had been some long absent friend, whom she dearly loved. She presented me to her mother and sister, who were present with her, all sitting together in her bed-room, quite *en famille*. One of the ladies was knitting. The Marquise herself was in a chintz gown. She is a middle-sized lady, sprightly and agreeable; and professes herself strongly attached to Americans. She supports an amiable character, is fond of her children, and very attentive to them, which is not the general character of ladies of high rank in Europe. In a few days, she returned my visit, upon which we sent her a card of invitation to dine. She came; we had a large company. There is not a lady in our country, who would have gone abroad to dine so little dressed; and one of our fine American ladies, who sat by me, whispered to me, "Good Heavens! how awfully she is dressed." I could not forbear returning the whisper, which I most sincerely despised, by replying, that the lady's rank sets her above the little formalities of dress. She had on a Brown Florence gown and petticoat,—which is the only silk, excepting satins, which are worn here in winter,—a plain double gauze handkerchief, a pretty cap, with a white ribbon in it, and looked very neat. The rouge, 't is true, was not so artfully laid on, as upon the faces of

the American ladies who were present. Whilst they were glittering with diamonds, watch-chains, girdle-buckles, &c., the Marquise was nowise ruffled by her own different appearance. A really well-bred French lady has the most ease in her manners, that you can possibly conceive of. It is studied by them as an art, and they render it nature. It requires some time, you know, before any fashion quite new becomes familiar to us. The dress of the French ladies has the most taste and variety in it, of any I have yet seen; but these are topics I must reserve to amuse my young acquaintance with. I have seen none, however, who carry the extravagance of dress to such a height as the Americans who are here, some of whom, I have reason to think, live at an expense double what is allowed to the American ministers. They must, however, abide the consequences.

Mr. Jefferson has been sick, and confined to his house for six weeks. He is upon the recovery, though very weak and feeble. Dr. Franklin is much afflicted with his disorder, which prevents his going abroad, unless when the weather will permit him to walk.

12 December, 1784.

“Do you say that Scott has arrived in England?” said I to my friend, when he returned from Paris, “and that Messrs. Tracy and Jackson have received their letters by the post, and that we have none? How can this be? News, too, of Mr. Smith’s arrival.” Thus passed the day, and the next which followed; but in the evening a letter was brought for J. Q. A. from London, from Charles Storer, informing us that he had received sundry large packets from America; not being able to find a private conveyance, he had sent them by the new *diligence*, lately set up, which passed once a week from Calais to Paris. It was evening. No sending in that night, because a servant could not get them. There was nothing to be done but to wait patiently until the next morning. As soon as breakfast was over, the carriage was ordered, and Mr. J. Q. A. set off for Paris. About two o’clock he returned, and was met with a “Well;



have you found the letters ? ” “ Yes, he had heard of them, but could not procure them ; they refused to deliver them at the post-office, because he had carried no proof that the letters belonged to the family ; he might be an impostor, for aught they knew, and they were answerable for them ; he scolded and fretted, but all to no purpose ; they finally promised to send them out in the evening to our hotel.” O how provoking ! About eight in the evening, however, they were brought in and safely delivered, to our great joy. We were all together. Mr. Adams in his easy-chair upon one side of the table, reading Plato’s Laws ; Mrs. A. upon the other, reading Mr. St. John’s “ Letters ” ; Abby, sitting upon the left hand, in a low chair, in a pensive posture ; — enter J. Q. A. from his own room, with the letters in his hand, tied and sealed up, as if they were never to be read ; for Charles had put half a dozen new covers upon them. Mr. A. must cut and undo them leisurely, each one watching with eagerness. Finally, the originals were discovered ; “ Here is one for you, my dear, and here is another ; and here, Miss Abby, are four, five, upon my word, six, for you, and more yet for your mamma. Well, I fancy I shall come off but slenderly. One only for me.” “ Are there none for me, Sir ? ” says Mr. J. Q. A., erecting his head, and walking away a little mortified.

We then began to unseal and read ; and a rich repast we had. Thank you, my dear sister, for your part of the entertainment. I will not regret sending my journal, uncouth as I know it was ; to friends, who so nearly interest themselves in the welfare of each other, every event, as it passes, becomes an object of their attention. You will chide me, I suppose, for not relating to you an event, which took place in London ; that of unexpectedly meeting there my long absent friend ; for from his letters by my son, I had no idea that he would come. But you know, my dear sister, that poets and painters wisely draw a veil over those scenes, which surpass the pen of the one, and the pencil of the other. We were, indeed, a very, very happy family, once more met together, after a separation of four years. For

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particular reasons we remained but one day in England, after the arrival of Mr. A. We set off on Sunday morning, as I believe I have before related, in a coach, and our two servants in a post-chaise. As we travelled over the same part of the country which I had before described in my journey up to London, I was not particular in relating my journey to Dover. We were about twelve hours in crossing to Calais.

The difference is so great between travelling through England and through France, that no person could possibly imagine that these countries were separated only by a few leagues. Their horses, their carriages, their postilions, their inns! I know not how to point out the difference, unless you will suppose yourself a stranger in your own country, first entertained at Mr. Swan's, then at General Warren's, and next at Bracket's tavern. Such is the difference, I assure you. From Calais to Paris you pass through a number of villages, which have the most miserable appearance, in general; the houses of the peasants being chiefly low, thatched huts, without a single glass window. Their fields were well cultivated, and we saw everywhere women and children laboring in them. There is not, however, that rich luxuriance, which beauteous England exhibits, nor have they ornamented their fields with the hedge, which gives England a vast advantage in appearance, over this country. The place most worthy of notice between Calais and Paris, is Chantilly, where we stopped one day; but, as I was so much fatigued with my journey, I made no minute of what I saw there, though richly worth a particular description. I must, therefore, request the favor of Mr. J. Q. A. to transcribe a few incorrect minutes from his journal, which will give you some idea of what we saw there. I have not a wish to repeat this journey in the winter season; but I greatly fear we shall be obliged to do so, as England does not choose to treat in France. This, however, you will not mention at present; as I cannot yet assure you what will be the result of the last despatches sent to that court.

This is the twelfth of December; and a severer snow-storm than the present is seldom seen in our country at this season. I was pleased at the appearance, because it looked so American; but the poor Frenchman will shrug his shoulders.

I feel very loth to part with my son, and shall miss him more than I can express; but I am convinced that it will be much for his advantage to spend one year at Harvard, provided he makes, as I have no reason to doubt, a suitable improvement of his time and talents; the latter, the partiality of a mother would say, no young fellow of his age can boast superior; yet there are many branches of knowledge in which he is deficient, and which, I think, he will be best able to acquire in his own country. I am sure he will acquire them with more pleasure to himself, because he will find there companions and associates. Besides, America is the theatre for a young fellow who has any ambition to distinguish himself in knowledge and literature; so that, if his father consents, I think it not unlikely that you will see him in the course of next summer. I hope I shall follow him the next spring. Europe will have fewer charms for me then, than it has at present.

I know not how to bid adieu. You did not say a word of uncle Quincy. How does he do? My duty to him; tell him, if Mr. A. was in Braintree, he would walk twice a week to see him. Madam Quincy, too, how is she? My respects to her, and to Mr. Wibird, who, I think, misses me as much as I do his friendly visits.

Affectionately yours,  
A. A.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

Auteuil, 14 December, 1784.

MY DEAR SISTER,

FROM the interest you take in every thing which concerns your friends, I hear you inquiring how I do, how I live,

whom I see, where I visit, who visit me. I know not whether your curiosity extends so far as the color of the house, which is white stone, and to the furniture of the chamber where I sleep. If it does, you must apply to Betsey Cranch for information, whose fancy has employed itself so busily as to seek for intelligence even in the minutiae; and, although they look trifling upon paper, yet, if our friends take an interest in them, that renders them important; and I am the rather tempted to a compliance from the recollection, that, when I have received a sentimental letter from an absent friend, I have passed over the sentiment at the first reading, and hunted for that part, which more particularly related to themselves.

This village, where we reside, is four miles from Paris, and is famous for nothing that I know of, but the learned men who have inhabited it. Such were Boileau, Molière, D'Aguesseau, and Helvétius. The first and last lived near this hôtel, and Boileau's garden is preserved as a choice relic. As to my own health, it is much as usual. I suffer through want of exercise, and grow too fat. I cannot persuade myself to walk an hour in the day, in a long entry which we have, merely for exercise; and as to the streets, they are continually a quagmire. No walking there without boots or wooden shoes, neither of which are my feet calculated for. Mr. Adams makes it his constant practice to walk several miles every day, without which he would not be able to preserve his health, which at best is but infirm. He professes himself so much happier for having his family with him, that I feel amply gratified in having ventured across the ocean. He is determined, that nothing but the inevitable stroke of death shall in future separate him at least from one part of it; so that I know not what climates I may yet have to visit, — more, I fear, than will be agreeable to either of us.

If you want to know the manners and customs of this country, I answer you, that pleasure is the business of life, more especially upon a Sunday. We have no days with us or rather with you, by which I can give you any idea of



them, except Commencements and Elections. We have a pretty wood within a few rods of this house, which is called the Bois de Boulogne. This is cut into many regular walks, and during the summer months, upon Sundays, it looked like Boston and Cambridge Commons upon the public days I have mentioned. Paris is a horrid dirty city, and I know not whether the inhabitants could exist, if they did not come out one day in the week to breathe a fresh air. I have sat at my window of a Sunday, and seen whole cartloads of them at a time. I speak literally; for those, who neither own a coach nor are able to hire one, procure a cart, which in this country is always drawn by horses. Sometimes they have a piece of canvass over it. There are benches placed in them, and in this vehicle you will see as many well-dressed women and children as can possibly pile in, led out by a man, or driven. Just at the entrance of the wood they descend. The day is spent in music, dancing, and every kind of play. It is a very rare thing to see a man with a hat anywhere but under his arm, or a woman with a bonnet upon her head. This would brush off the powder, and spoil the elegant *toupet*. They have a fashion of wearing a hood or veil either of gauze or silk. If you send for a tailor in this country, your servant will very soon introduce to you a gentleman full dressed in black, with his head as white as a snow-bank, and which a hat never rumbled. If you send to a mantuamaker, she will visit you in the same style, with her silk gown and petticoat, her head in ample order, though, perhaps, she lives up five pair of stairs, and eats nothing but bread and water, as two thirds of these people do. We have a servant in our family, who dresses more than his young master, and would not be guilty of tending table *unfrizzed*, upon any consideration. He dresses the hair of his young master, but has his own dressed by a hair-dresser. By the way, I was guilty of a sad mistake in London. I desired the servant to procure me a barber. The fellow stared, and was loth to ask for what purpose I wanted him. At last he said, "You mean a hair-dresser, Madam, I believe?" "Ay," says I, "I want my hair dressed."

“Why, barbers, Madam, in this country, do nothing but shave.”

When first I came to this country, I was loth to submit to such an unnecessary number of domestics, as it appeared to me, but I soon found that they would not let me do without them; because, every one having a fixed and settled department, they would not lift a pin out of it, although two thirds of the time they had no employment. We are however thankful that we are able to make eight do for us, though we meet with some difficulties for want of a ninth. Do not suppose from this, that we live remarkably nice. I never put up in America with what I do here. I often think of Swift's High Dutch bride, who had so much nastiness, and so much pride.

Adieu. Most affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, January 3, 1785.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

I AM determined not to neglect my pen for so long an interval as I did before your last letters, for then I always go to it with reluctance. Mr. Appleton came here this day week from London, and as he thinks he shall return before Captain Young sails, I am induced to proceed to the fulfilment of my promise, and attempt a description of the French Theatre. I have, from time to time, surveyed it with as much accuracy as I am capable of, that I might be able to render my account intelligible. If I fail in architecture, your lively imagination must supply my deficiency.

This superb building, the French Theatre, is situated near the Palace of Luxembourg, and was built by Messrs. Duvally and Peyre, the ablest architects of the king. This monument is open on every side, and is in the form of a parallelogram (for this figure see the Preceptor, plate 1st,

in Geometry, figure 9, B. D.); this is surrounded with porticos which form galleries, by which means you go up and come down under cover. The front, where you first enter, is simple, but noble, and announces its majesty by a peristyle, or a circular range of pillars jutting out, decorated with eight columns in the Doric order; you ascend to it by nine large stone stairs. The back is ornamented with partitions, and the whole is covered by an attic, which term signifies having the roof concealed, and is a peculiar kind of base used sometimes in the Doric and Ionic orders. Under this porch there are three doors, each of which introduces you into a hall decorated with columns in the Tuscan order (for this order, see the Preceptor); these sustain an arched roof. In front of the middle door, and at the bottom of the hall, there is a marble statue of Voltaire. The doors which open upon both sides of this statue, serve as an entrance into a large entry, which was designed as a safe retreat in case of fire. Accordingly it communicates with the highest galleries as well as the pit, the orchestra, and the stairs of all the boxes. In this entry, you are presented with two great flights of stairs opposite each other, which conduct you equally to the first stage or two galleries in colonnade, a series of pillars disposed in a circle, which communicate with the entry of the first boxes, and through them into the great public retiring-room. This room is decorated in the Doric order of a new invention. It represents a hall in the Italian form, square at the bottom and octagon (which is a plain figure, consisting of eight equal sides and angles) at the first entablature (that is, at the first frieze and cornice of the pillars) and circular at the top which supports the cupola, which signifies a dome, the hemispherical summit of a building. This hall is consecrated to the memory of the great men, who have rendered the French Theatre illustrious; accordingly you find their marble busts placed round it. Molière, as the father of comedy, has his seat over the chimney, and on the right hand is Piron and Voltaire, Racine and Regnard, upon the left Crebillon *Nericault Destouches*, *Pierre Corneille*, Dufresnoy. Over the doors are



the medallions of Plautus, Terence, Sophocles, and Euripides. This hall is enlightened by six large lustres, each of which holds fifty lights; they are of great service to the entry which communicates with it. To compare great things with small, imagine yourself in the gallery of the cupola of Dr. Cooper's meeting-house, and this cupola under the covering which I have described. It has as many small doors, just large enough for one person to enter at a time, as there are boxes within; open one of them and it introduces you into the first boxes of the great theatre. Look above you, and you will see three galleries divided into boxes in the same manner as the first. Look below you, and you will see what is called the amphitheatre, in which are two rows of benches advanced sufficiently forward to give the spectators an equal chance of seeing. You must never lose sight of the perfect circular figure of the house, and that taking off a quarter part of your circle for the theatre, you leave the other three quarters for the spectators, who all necessarily face the theatre; below the amphitheatre is the pit upon the first floor, and here are rows of benches, that every person may sit down; between the pit and theatre is the orchestra. The musicians, when sitting, have their heads just even with the floor of the theatre. The inside of the boxes are covered with green velvet, and cushions of the same; the first boxes will hold six persons, but four are sufficient for comfort. The front of the boxes, which resembles the gallery of a meeting-house, is ornamented with drapery, and the second galleries, which are advanced a little forward of the first, are adorned with garlands of flowers and fruit in relievo, which you know is the seeming prominence of a figure in sculpture. Above the uppermost boxes are twelve bendings in the vault, which is supported by twelve pilasters. The twelve signs of the Zodiac ornament these arches which are all in arabesque sculpture. Before the scene are four pillars adorned with caryatides as large as life,—this is an order of columns under the representation of women clothed in long robes and serving to support entablatures. For a figure of this kind look in the Preceptor to the Corinthian order, and for the arabesque

which adorns the vault, look to the composite order, against the term, *follages*, *a, a*. Over the top of the stage is the Lyre of Apollo, supported by Melpomene, who represents the Tragic Muse, and holds a dagger in her hand, and Thalia, the Comic Muse, who has a mask in hers. These figures are in sculpture as large as life. The inside of this theatre is painted a sky-blue, and the ornaments are all white. From the middle of this vault hangs a prodigious lustre, containing, I imagine, two hundred lights. There is over this lustre, in the arch of the ceiling, a circle, perhaps forty feet in circumference, which is inlaid with some shining metal, and reflects back the lights in such a manner that I have easily read the finest print, as I sat in the box. The floor of the stage is lighted by two rows of lamps, which are placed upon it just before the orchestra, and are so constructed as to be drawn below it, whenever the part acted requires that it should be night. Fancy, my dear Betsey, this house filled with two thousand well-dressed gentlemen and ladies! The house is large enough to hold double the number. Suppose some tragedy to be represented which requires the grandest scenery and the most superb habits of kings and queens, the parts well performed, and the passions all excited, until you imagine yourself living at the very period, and witnessing what you see represented, or, in the words of Pope,

“Live o’er the scene, and be what you behold.”

Can you form to yourself a higher repast, or one more agreeable to your taste? To my dictionary and the Preceptor I am indebted for the explanation of the terms of architecture, and, like many other preceptors, whilst I have endeavoured to instruct, I have found my own knowledge increased, for I should never have comprehended half the beauties of this theatre, if I had not attempted a description of them to you.

Since I began this letter, yours of the sixth of November reached me. You was at Germantown assisting a worthy

family, whose various and complicated distresses would furnish sufficient materials for a tragic muse. The book of Fate is wisely closed from the prying eye of man, or "who could suffer being here below." My affectionate regards to them. My paper calls upon me to close and to assure you, whilst I have sufficient space, of the affection of your Aunt,

A. A.

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TO THE REVEREND JOHN SHAW.

Auteuil, 18 January, 1785.

I FIND, Sir, what I never doubted, that you are a gentleman of your word. I thank you for the agreeable proof which you have given me of it; and, that I may not be wanting in punctuality, I have taken my pen to discharge the debt which I acknowledge is due to you.

Amongst the public edifices which are worthy of notice in this country, are several churches. I went, a few days since, to see three of the most celebrated in Paris. They are prodigious masses of stone buildings, and so surrounded by houses which are seven stories high, that the sun seldom enlightens them. I found them so cold and damp, that I could only give them a very hasty and transient survey. The architecture, the sculpture, the paintings, are beautiful indeed, and each of them would employ my pen for several pages, when the weather will permit me to take a more accurate and critical inspection of them. These churches are open every day, and at all times of the day; so that you never enter them without finding priests upon their knees, half a dozen at a time, and more at the hours of confession. All kinds of people and of all ages go in without ceremony, and regardless of each other; fall upon their knees, cross themselves, say their Pater-nosters and Ave-Marias silently, and go out again without being noticed or even seen by the priests, whom I found always kneeling with their faces to-



wards the altar. Round these churches, (for they have not pews and galleries as with us, chairs alone being made use of,) there are little boxes or closets about as large as a sentry-box, in which is a small grated window, which communicates with another closet of the same kind. One of them holds the person who is confessing, and the other the confessor, who places his ear at this window, hears the crime, absolves the transgressor, and very often makes an assignation for a repetition of the same crime, or perhaps a new one. I do not think this a breach of charity; for can we suppose, that, of the many thousands whom the religion of the country obliges to celibacy, one quarter part of the number can find its influence sufficiently powerful to conquer those passions which nature has implanted in man, when the gratification of them will cost them only a few livres in confession?

I was at the church of St. Roch about ten o'clock in the morning, and, whilst I was there, about three hundred little boys came in from some charity seminary which belongs to that church. They had books in their hands. They followed each other in regular order, and fell upon their knees in rows like soldiers in rank and file. There might have been fifty other persons in the church at their devotion. Every thing was silent and solemn throughout this vast edifice. I was walking with a slow pace round it, when, all at once, the drear silence which reigned was suddenly broken by all these boys at one instant chanting with loud voices, which made the dome ring, and me start, for I had no apprehension of any sound. I have never been to any of these churches upon a Sunday. When the weather is warmer, I design it. But their churches seem rather calculated to damp devotion than excite it. I took such a cold there as I have not had since I have been in France. I have been several times to the chapel of the Dutch ambassador, and should go oftener if I could comprehend the discourses, which are all in French. I believe the American embassy is the only one to which chaplains are not allowed. Do Congress think that their ministers have no need of grace? or that religion is not a necessary article for them? Sunday will not feel so to me

whilst I continue in this country. It is high holiday for all France.

We had a visit the other day from no less a personage than Abbé Thayer, in his habit, who has become a convert. His visit was to me, I suppose, for he was a perfect stranger to Mr. Adams. He told us that he had spent a year at Rome, that he belonged to a seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris, that he never knew what religion was, until his conversion, and that he designed to return to America in a year or two, to see if he could not convert his friends and acquaintance. After talking some time in this style, he began to question Mr. Adams if he believed the Bible, and to rail at Luther and Calvin; upon which Mr. Adams took him up pretty short, and told him that he was not going to make a father confessor of him, that his religion was a matter that he did not look upon himself accountable for to any one but his Maker, and that he did not choose to hear either Luther or Calvin treated in such a manner. Mr. Abbé took his leave after some time, without any invitation to repeat his visit.

I am very truly yours,

A. A.

TO MRS. STORER.<sup>1</sup>

Auteuil, 20 January, 1785.

MY DEAR MADAM,

FOR your kind congratulations upon my arrival in Europe receive my thanks. Those only, who have crossed the ocean, can realize the pleasure which is felt at the sight of land. The inexperienced traveller is more sensible of this, than those who frequently traverse the ocean. I could scarcely realize that thirty days had removed me so far distant from my native shore; but the new objects which surrounded me did not efface from my remembrance the dearer

<sup>1</sup> This is the same lady to whom the first letter of the present collection was addressed, and the Editor is indebted for both to the same source.

ones which I left behind me. "And is this the country, and are these the people, who so lately waged a cruel war against us?" were reflections, which did not escape me amidst all the beauty and grandeur, which presented themselves to my eyes. You have doubtless heard from my friends, that I was pleased with England, and that I met with much civility and politeness there, and a large share of it from your connexions.

I am now resident in a country, to which many Americans give the preference. The climate is said to be more temperate and mild. I can pass no judgment by comparison, but that there are more fogs in both, than are agreeable to me. A North American, however, has no right to complain of the rigor of a climate, which, in the middle of January, is as mild as our May; though I think the fall of the year was near as cold as ours.

Do you know, my dear Madam, what a task you have set me? a description of ladies!

"Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute."

To a lady of Mrs. Storer's discernment, the mere superficial adorning of the sex would afford but little satisfaction. Yet this is all I shall be able to recount to her. A stranger in the country, not only to the people, but to the language, I cannot judge of mental accomplishment, unless you will allow that dress and appearance are the index of the mind. The etiquette of this country requires the first visit from the stranger. You will easily suppose, that I have not been very fond of so awkward a situation as going to visit ladies, merely to make my dumb compliments, and receive them in return. I have declined visiting several personages, to whom Mr. Adams would have introduced me, upon this account. An acquaintance with a gentleman by no means insures to you a knowledge of his lady; for no one will be so ill-bred as to suppose an intercourse between them. It is from my observations of the French ladies at the theatres and public walks, that my chief knowledge of them is derived.

The dress of the French ladies is, like their manners, light, airy, and genteel. They are easy in their deport-



ment, eloquent in their speech, their voices soft and musical, and their attitude pleasing. Habituated to frequent the theatres from their earliest age, they become perfect mistresses of the art of insinuation and the powers of persuasion. Intelligence is communicated to every feature of the face, and to every limb of the body; so that it may with truth be said, every man of this nation is an actor, and every woman an actress. It is not only among the rich and polite, who attend the great theatres, that this art is acquired, but there are a dozen small theatres, to which all classes resort. There are frequently given pieces at the opera, and at the small theatres, where the actors speak not a single word, but where the action alone will delineate to you the story. I was at one of this kind last evening. The story is too long to relate here; but there was a terrible sea-storm in it; the rolling of the sea, the mounting of the vessel upon the waves, in which I could discern a lady and little child in the utmost distress, the terrible claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, which flew from one side of the stage to the other, really worked me up to such a pitch, that I trembled with terror. The vessel was finally dashed upon the rocks, and the lady and child were cast on a desert island.

The dancing on the stage is a great amusement to me, and the dresses are beautifully fanciful. The fashionable shape of the ladies here is, to be very small at the bottom of the waist, and very large round the shoulders, — a wasp's, — pardon me, ladies, that I should make such a comparison, it is only in shape that I mean to resemble you to them. You and I, Madam, must despair of being in the mode.

I enclose to you the pattern of a stomacher, cape and forebody of a gown; different petticoats are much worn, and then the stomacher must be of the petticoat color, and the cape of the gown, as well as the sleeves. Sometimes a false sleeve is made use of to draw over the other, and, in that case, the cape is like the gown. Gowns and petticoats are worn without any trimming of any kind. That is reserved for full dress only, when very large hoops and negligees, with trains three yards long, are worn. But

these are not used, except at Court, and then only upon public occasions; the Queen herself, and the ladies of honor, dressing very plain upon other days. Abby has made you a miniature handkerchief, just to show you one mode; but caps, hats, and handkerchiefs are as various as ladies' and milliners' fancies can devise.

Thus, Madam, having displayed the mode to you, be so good as to present Mr. Adams's and my regards to Mr. Storer, and in one word, to all who inquire after your affectionate friend,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

Auteuil, 24 January, 1785.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I HOPE you have before now received my letter, which was ordered on board with Captain Lyde, but put on board another vessel, because it was said she would sail first. By that you will see that I did not wait to receive a letter from you first. I thank you for yours of November 6th, which reached me last evening; and here I am, seated by your cousin J. Q. A.'s fireside, where, by his invitation, I usually write.

And in the first place, my dear Lucy, shall I find a little fault with you? a fault, from which neither your good sister, nor cousin Abby, is free. It is that all of you so much neglect your handwriting. I know that a sentiment is equally wise and just, written in a good or bad hand; but then there is certainly a more pleasing appearance, when the lines are regular, and the letters distinct and well cut. A sensible woman is so, whether she be handsome or ugly; but who looks not with most pleasure upon the sensible beauty? "Why, my dear aunt," methinks I hear you say, "only look at your own handwriting." Acknowledged; I

am very sensible of it, and it is from feeling the disadvantages of it myself, that I am the more solicitous that my young acquaintance should excel me, whilst they have leisure, and their fingers are young and flexible. Your cousin, J. Q. A., copied a letter for me the other day, and, upon my word, I thought there was some value in it, from the new appearance it acquired.

I have written several times largely to your sister, and, as I know you participate with her, I have not been so particular in scribbling to every one of the family ; for an imagination must be more inventive than mine, to supply materials with sufficient variety to afford you all entertainment. Through want of a better subject, I will relate to you a custom of this country. You must know that the religion of this country requires abundance of feasting and fasting, and each person has his particular saint, as well as each calling and occupation. To-morrow is to be celebrated, *le jour des rois*. The day before this feast it is customary to make a large paste pie, into which one bean is put. Each person at table cuts his slice, and the one who is so lucky as to obtain the bean, is dubbed king or queen. Accordingly, to-day, when I went in to dinner, I found one upon our table.

Your cousin Abby began by taking the first slice ; but alas ! poor girl, no bean, and no queen. In the next place, your cousin John seconded her by taking a larger cut, and as cautious as cousin T — when he inspects merchandise, bisected his paste with mathematical circumspection ; but to him it pertained not. By this time, I was ready for my part ; but first I declared that I had no cravings for royalty. I accordingly separated my piece with much firmness, notwithstanding disappointed that it fell not to me. Your uncle, who was all this time picking his chicken bone, saw us divert ourselves without saying any thing ; but presently he seized the remaining half, and to crumbs went the poor paste, cut here and slash there ; when, behold the bean ! And thus," said he, "are kingdoms obtained ;" but the servant, who stood by and saw the havoc, declared solemnly that he could



not retain the title, as the laws decreed it to chance, and not to force.

How is General Warren's family? Well, I hope, or I should have heard of it. I am sorry Mrs. Warren is so scrupulous about writing to me. I forwarded a long letter to her some time since. Where is Miss Nancy Quincy? Well, I hope. We often laugh at your cousin John about her. He says her stature would be a great recommendation to him, as he is determined never to marry a tall woman, lest her height should give her a superiority over him. He is generally thought older than your cousin Abby; and partly, I believe, because his company is with those much older than himself.

As to the Germantown family, my soul is grieved for them. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Would to Heaven that the clouds would disperse, and give them a brighter day. My best respects to them. Let Mrs. Field know that Esther is quite recovered, and as gay as a lark. She went to Paris the other day with Pauline, to see a play, which is called "Figaro." It is a piece much celebrated, and has had sixty-eight representations; and every thing was so new to her, that Pauline says, "Est is crazed."

Affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 20 February, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

THIS day eight months I sailed for Europe, since which many new and interesting scenes have presented themselves before me. I have seen many of the beauties, and some of the deformities, of this old world. I have been more than ever convinced, that there is no summit of virtue, and no depth of vice, which human nature is not capable of rising to, on the one hand, or sinking into, on the other. I have

felt the force of an observation, which I have read, that daily example is the most subtile of poisons.) I have found my taste reconciling itself to habits, customs, and fashions, which at first disgusted me. / The first dance which I saw upon the stage shocked me; the dresses and beauty of the performers were enchanting; but, no sooner did the dance commence, than I felt my delicacy wounded, and I was ashamed to be seen to look at them. Girls, clothed in the thinnest silk and gauze, with their petticoats short, springing two feet from the floor, poising themselves in the air, with their feet flying, and as perfectly showing their garters and drawers as though no petticoat had been worn, was a sight altogether new to me. Their motions are as light as air, and as quick as lightning; they balance themselves to astonishment. No description can equal the reality. They are daily trained to it, from early infancy, at a royal academy, instituted for this purpose. You will very often see little creatures, not more than seven or eight years old, as undauntedly performing their parts as the eldest among them. Shall I speak a truth, and say that repeatedly seeing these dances has worn off that disgust, which I at first felt, and that I see them now with pleasure? Yet, when I consider the tendency of these things, the passions they must excite, and the known character, even to a proverb, which is attached to an opera girl, my abhorrence is not lessened, and neither my reason nor judgment has accompanied my sensibility in acquiring any degree of callousness. The art of dancing is carried to the highest degree of perfection that it is capable of. At the opera, the house is neither so grand, nor of so beautiful architecture, as the French theatre, but it is more frequented by the *beau monde*, who had rather be amused than instructed. The scenery is more various and more highly decorated, the dresses more costly and rich. And O! the music, vocal and instrumental; it has a soft; persuasive power, and a dying sound. Conceive a highly decorated building, filled with youth, beauty, grace, ease, clad in all the most pleasing and various ornaments of dress, which fancy can form; these objects singing like cherubs

to the best tuned instruments, most skilfully handled, the softest, tenderest strains ; every attitude corresponding with the music ; full of the god or goddess whom they celebrate ; the female voices accompanied by an equal number of Adonises. Think you that this city can fail of becoming a Cythera, and this house the temple of Venus ?

“When music softens, and when dancing fires,”

it requires the immortal shield of the invincible Minerva, to screen youth from the arrows which assail them on every side.

As soon as a girl sets her foot upon the floor of the opera, she is excommunicated by the Church, and denied burial in holy ground. She conceives nothing worse can happen to her ; all restraint is thrown off, and she delivers herself to the first who bids high enough for her. But let me turn from a picture, of which the outlines are but just sketched ; I would willingly veil the rest, as it can only tend to excite sentiments of horror.

13 March, 1785.

You will see, by the former date, that my letter has lain by me some time. Mr. Pickman, of Salem, who is going to London, has promised to take this with him, and will carry it himself, if no opportunity offers before, to America. We are all well ; some preparing for America, and others longing for the time of their departure thither. What a sad misfortune it is to have the body in one place, and the soul in another. Indeed, my dear sister, I hope to come home the spring after the present. My acquaintance here is not large, nor ever will be. Then, what are dinners, and visits of ceremony, compared with “the feast of reason, and the flow of soul” ? I have dined twice at the Marquis de la Fayette’s, with a large company, some of whom I was acquainted with, and others that I never saw before ; and to-morrow are to dine here, Mr. Brantzen, the Ambassador Extraordinary from Holland ; the Chevalier de la Luzerne, late Minister in America ; Marquis de la Fayette and his



lady ; Mr. W. T. Franklin, late Secretary to the American Commission ; Colonel Humphreys, our present Secretary ; and Mr. Williams, a worthy, clever gentleman, who has been very friendly to us ; Mr. Jonathan Williams, a Bostonian, who very often comes to have a social talk about all our old friends and acquaintance in Boston ; the Chevalier Jones ; Mr. Bingham and lady ; a Mr. and Mrs. Rucker, and Mrs. Rucker's sister, lately from New York, strangers to me ; but all strangers, from every part of America, visit the American Ministers, and then are invited to dine with them. The Duc de la Vauguyon was invited also ; but, not hearing from him, I suppose him not in Paris at present ; he was late Minister from this Court to Holland. Madame la Marquise de la Fayette is a very agreeable lady, and has two very pretty children ; the third, Virginia, I have never seen ; it is in the country ; the eldest daughter is seven years old, and George Washington about five. After dinner, Miss and Master are always introduced to the company ; both of them speak English, and behave very prettily. Madame de la Fayette has promised to bring me acquainted with her mother, the Duchess de Noailles, who is now at Versailles, waiting for the birth of a Prince, or Princess, which is daily expected ; and, as she is one of the ladies of honor to the Queen, her attendance is indispensable.

I have scarcely room left to say, that I am,  
Very affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 8 March, 1785.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

THERE is a gentleman by the name of Blaney, a Philadelphian, who is, with other company, to dine here to-day, and on Monday is going to England. I think to charge him with a letter or two. I know not of any present convey-

ance, unless Young is yet there ; who has been going every week ever since December, and who has, as my friends will find, letters on board written in that month, which is very discouraging. I could write by way of New York, monthly, but I am loth to load my friends with postage. If Mr. Gerry continues there, I shall sometimes take the freedom of covering a letter to him, and getting him to forward it by a private hand, and my friends may in the same manner enclose at any time under cover to Mr. Jay, who is Minister for Foreign Affairs, directed to your uncle, which letters have a right to come as far as the packet without postage, and from thence will not be more expensive, nor indeed so much so, as those which come by way of England. Never omit writing for want of subjects ; every thing and every object is interesting to me, ten thousand times more so than any thing which I can write you from hence, because I had almost said I love every thing and every body in that country. Tell me when you begin to garden ; I can brag over you in that respect, for our flower-pots were set out in February, and our garden began to look smiling. The orange-trees were not, however, brought out of the house, and it was very lucky they were not, for since this month commenced, came a nipping frost, very unusual at this season, and stiffened all our flower-roots. I really fear they are killed. Oh, Betsey, how you would delight in this garden ! As for the house, it is large, and with twenty thousand livres of expense in repairs and furniture, would be very elegant, and fit for a minister to live in ; but as it is, let it pass, it is as good as we can afford, and has a fine clear air. The garden, too, is much out of repair, and bespeaks the extravagant profusion of its owners, who are not able to put it in order. The garden is, however, a beautiful walk in summer, and the beautiful variety of flowers would tempt you to tan yourself in picking and trimming them. The garden has a number of statues and figures, but there is none which pleases me more than one of a boy who has robbed a bird of her nest of young, which he holds in one hand, and in the other the old bird, who has laid hold of his

finger with her bill, and is biting it furiously, so that the countenance of the lad is in great distress, between the fear of losing the young, and the pain of his finger. Cousin Abby says, "Madam, the company have come, some of them." "Well, then, go down and entertain them; for I will finish my letter to Betsey." There is amongst them a Mr. Pickman, of Salem, to whom Mr. Tracy gave a letter of introduction; do you know him? I have never seen him yet; he called and left his name one day, and his address. Your Cousin John returned his visit, but not being at home, he also left a card, and we sent him an invitation to dine here to-day; that is the form and process in this country. There is a Mr. Williams here who was in Boston after I left it; he is a Swiss by birth, a very clever, sensible, obliging man, who is a very great intimate of Mr. Jefferson's, which alone would be sufficient to recommend him; he dines here to-day, and Colonel Humphreys, our Secretary, a Mr. Warren, a Carolinian, and Miss Jefferson, from the walls of her convent, does us the favor of a visit to-day. These form our society for this day. Oh, could I transport you and your dear family, how much it would enhance the pleasure! Mr. T., too, should assist at table, as he is very handy that way; but his carving abilities would be almost useless here, as the provisions seldom want any thing more than shaking to pieces. I have got a long letter begun to your mamma, and I have had some thoughts of changing the address and sending it to you, only I owe her one, and not you. Tell Lucy I would give a great deal for one of her cats. I have absolutely had an inclination to buy me some little images, according to the mode of this country, that I might have some little creatures to amuse myself with; not that I have turned worshipper of those things, neither.

There is not one creature of you that will tell me a word of our good parson. How does he do? Alas! he deserves it, for being a single individual; I will, however, remember him, and tender him my respects.

I design to get my other letters ready to send about



the middle of the week, but if this should have the luck to get a passage as soon as it arrives in England, why it may possibly travel along, accompanied only with one to Dr. Tufts, and another to Mrs. Field, which is all I have had leisure to get ready. Your Cousin John thinks very much of it, that none of his friends have written to him. Remember me to all my dear friends; I can name none in particular, but your good parents. I have vanity enough to think it would take all the rest of my paper to enumerate them. I have written you all this, to show you how to trifle; and, as it is unworthy of a copy, and written in great haste, I must apologize for its inaccuracy. Believe me, my dear girl, affectionately yours,

A. A.

I dare not send my elder sister such a scrip; besides, I may venture to trifle with the daughter, when her mamma requires a steady pen.

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TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

Auteuil, 7 May, 1785.

I PRESUME my dear Lucy would be disappointed, if her cousin did not deliver her a line from her aunt. Yet it is hardly fair to take up an exhausted pen to address a young lady, whose eager search after knowledge entitles her to every communication in my power.

I was in hopes to have visited several curiosities before your cousin left us, that I might have been able to relate them to my friends; but several engagements in the company way, and some preparation for his voyage, together with the necessary arrangements for our own journey, have so fully occupied me, that I fear I shall fail in my intentions. We are to dine to day with Mr. Jefferson. Should any thing occur there worthy of notice, it shall be the subject of my evening pen.

Well, my dear niece, I have returned from Mr. Jefferson's. When I got there, I found a pretty large company. It consisted of the Marquis and Madame de la Fayette; the Count and Countess de —; a French Count, who had been a general in America, but whose name I forget; Commodore Jones; Mr. Jarvis, an American gentleman, lately arrived, the same who married Amelia Broom, who says there is so strong a likeness between your cousin and his lady, that he is obliged to be upon his guard, lest he should think himself at home, and make some mistake; he appears a very sensible, agreeable gentleman; a Mr. Bowdoin, an American also; I ask the Chevalier de la Luzerne's pardon, — I had like to have forgotten him; Mr. Williams, of course, as he always dines with Mr. Jefferson; and Mr. Short; though one of Mr. Jefferson's family, as he has been absent some time, I name him. He took a resolution that he would go into a French family at St. Germain, and acquire the language; and this is the only way for a foreigner to obtain it. I have often wished that I could not hear a word of English spoken. I think I have mentioned Mr. Short before, in some of my letters; he is about the stature of Mr. Tudor; a better figure, but much like him in looks and manners; consequently a favorite of mine. They have some customs very curious here. When company are invited to dine, if twenty gentlemen meet, they seldom or never sit down, but are standing or walking from one part of the room to the other, with their swords on, and their *chapeau de bras*, which is a very small silk hat, always worn under the arm. These they lay aside whilst they dine, but reassume them immediately after. I wonder how the fashion of standing crept in amongst a nation, who really deserve the appellation of polite; for in winter it shuts out all the fire from the ladies; I know I have suffered from it many times. At dinner, the ladies and gentlemen are mixed, and you converse with him who sits next you, rarely speaking to persons across the table, unless to ask if they will be served with any thing from your side. Conversation is never general, as with us; for, when the company quit the table, they fall

into *tête-a-tête* of two and two, when the conversation is in a low voice, and a stranger, unacquainted with the customs of the country, would think that everybody had private business to transact.

Last evening, as we returned, the weather being very soft and pleasant, I proposed to your uncle to stop at the Tuileries and walk in the garden, which we did for an hour ; there was, as usual, a collection of four or five thousand persons in the walks. This garden is the most celebrated public walk in Paris. It is situated just opposite to the river Seine, upon the left hand as you enter Paris from Auteuil. Upon Boston Neck, suppose that on one side flows the river Seine, and on the other hand is the garden of the Tuileries. There is a high wall next the street, upon which there is a terrace, which is used as a winter walk. This garden has six large gates, by which you may enter. It is adorned with noble rows of trees, straight, large, and tall, which form a most beautiful shade. The populace are not permitted to walk in this garden but upon the day of Saint Louis, when they have it all to themselves. Upon one side of this garden is the castle of the Tuileries, which is an immense pile of building, very ancient. It is in one of these châteaux, that the *concert spirituel* is held. Upon the terrace which borders this château, are six statues and two vases. These vases are large, circular spots of water, which is conveyed there from the Seine by leaden pipes under ground. Round the great vase, which is in the midst of the *parterre*, are four groups of white marble. One represents Lucretia ; the story, I know, is familiar to you. The Parisians do well to erect a statue to her, for at this day, there are many more Tarquins than Lucretias. She is represented as plunging the dagger into her bosom in presence of her husband. There is another statue, — Anchises saved from the flames of Troy by his son Æneas, who is carrying him out upon his shoulders, leading Ascanius, his son, by his hand. The third is the rape of Orithyia, the daughter of Erectheus, King of Athens, by Boreas ; and the fourth, the ravishment of Cybele by Saturn ; the two



last *very pretty* ornaments for a public garden. At the end of the great alley fronting the largest water-piece, which is in the form of an octagon, are eight more marble statues. Upon the right is Hannibal, counting the rings which were taken from the knights who were killed in the battle of Cannæ. Two Seasons, Spring and Winter, are upon the left hand, and a very beautiful figure of Scipio Africanus, near which are the two other Seasons, Summer and Autumn, and a statue of the Empress Agrippina. Over against these are four Rivers, colossal, represented sleeping, the Seine, the Loire, the Tiber, and the Nile. At the end of the two terraces, are two figures in marble, mounted upon winged horses; one is Mercury, and the other Fame, who, as usual, is blowing a trumpet. In very hot weather, the alleys are watered; under the trees are seats and chairs, which you may hire to sit in for a sou or two. There are many plots of grass interspersed.

Thus, you see, I have scribbled you a long letter. I hope my description will please you. This is my eleventh letter, and I have yet several others to write; so adieu, my dear Lucy, and believe me most affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

Auteuil, 8 May, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I do not expect to date you any more letters from this place. Delightful and blooming garden, how much shall I regret your loss! The fish-pond and the fountain are just put in order; the trees are in blossom, and the flowers are coming on in succession; the forest trees are new clad in green, several beautiful rows of which form arched bowers at the bottom of our garden, the tops being cut so that they look like one continued plain; their leaves and branches entwine. and shade you entirely from the rays of the sun. It will

not be easy to find in the midst of a city so charming a scene. I shall quit it, however, with less reluctance, on account of my son's absence, which would be more irksome to me here, than in a country the language of which I shall be able to speak without an interpreter, or so much twisting and twirling of my tongue, and then pronouncing badly at last. I expect to be more scrutinized in England than here. "I said, I will take heed to my ways," is a text of holy writ fruitful of instruction in all situations of life, but it speaks more loudly to those who sustain public characters.

It is so long since I heard from my American friends, that I begin to grow impatient. I had hopes that another year's wandering would have put an end to our pilgrimage. You can hardly form an idea how difficult and expensive it is to be house-keeping a few months at a time in so many different countries. It has been Mr. Adams's fortune, ever since he came abroad, not to live a year at a time in one place. At the Hague he has a house and furniture, but they could not be removed five hundred miles; therefore it was necessary to hire a house and furniture here, to buy table linen, bed linen, china, glass, and plate. Here we have resided eight months, and now we must quit this for England. Removal in these countries is not so easy a matter as in ours; for, however well you may pack up your things for the purpose, they must undergo so many scrutinies, besides paying heavy duties for passing from one country to another. Of this I can give you one instance, which happened a few moments ago. A gentleman in one of the provinces sent Mr. Adams a present of five bottles of wine which he wished recommended in America, and this was to serve as a sample. The duties, which we had to pay upon only those five bottles, mounted them up to three livres a-piece, and the real value of the wine might be nine or ten coppers a bottle; be sure, not more.

The injury which clothing sustains, in such long journeys upon paved roads is incredible. I fancy I never related to you a droll adventure which happened to me on my journey here. My friends advised me, when I came abroad, to take

my money in crowns and dollars, as being the most advantageous for me ; but, when arrived, I found I could not part with them without much loss, so I concluded to take them with me to France. There were about two hundred, which I had put into a strong bag, and at the bottom of my travelling trunk they were placed, in the middle of which I had put a large band-box in which I had packed a very nice gauze bonnet, four caps, handkerchiefs, &c., (to the amount of about five guineas,) which I had made for me whilst I was in London. The third day of our journey, when I had occasion to open the trunk, I found a prodigious black dust upon the top. I directed it to be taken out, when O ! terrible to behold, “ dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,” nothing was left of all my rigging but a few black rags ; so that, when I got to Paris, I could not be seen until I had sent to the milliner’s and bought a cap. You can carry nothing with any safety, but what is upon the top of the carriage.

Affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 8 May, 1785.

YES, my dear niece, it was a ceremony that one must study some time to find out either pleasure or utility in it. I own, though I made one in the procession, I could not help feeling foolish, as I was parading first up one side of a wide road for a mile and a half, and then turning and following down a vast number of carriages upon the other, as slow as if I were attending a funeral. By this adjustment, you see, one row of carriages is constantly going up whilst the other is coming down, so that each cavalcade has a fair view of the other, and this is called going to Long Champs.

About the third of February the Carnival begins. During this time there is great festivity among the Parisians : the



operas are more frequent ; and masked balls succeed them ; the theatres are crowded, and every place is gay. But upon the 27th of March, or the Sunday upon which the celebration of the passion of our Saviour commences, the theatres are closed, and continue so during three weeks. Lent lasts six weeks, all of which is filled up with church ceremonies, one of which is the King's washing the feet of a dozen poor boys, and the Queen as many girls' ; after which, they give them a dinner in the palace, at which their majesties and the princesses of the blood attend them at table, the princes and lords carrying the plates. There is another ceremony, which is called the Day of Branches. The people go very early to mass, before daylight, and continue a long time at it ; after which the priests go forth, preceded by some church officer, with a large picture of our Saviour, and another with a silver cross ; the people follow, two and two, men, women, and children, with branches in their hands, and books, chanting their prayers. They go to kneel and pray before the crucifix, one of which is placed upon the road in every village. There are three days, also, when a piece of the *real* and *true* cross, as they say, is shown in the holy chapel of Paris, and every good Catholic kisses it. Then comes Holy Sunday, when everybody goes to church ; and, the night it begins, the clergy make a solemn procession into the halls of the palace at three o'clock in the morning ; and as nothing is performed here without the assistance of the military, the commandant of the watch sends two companies to escort this procession. But neither the *concert spirituel*, which is held three times a week in the Chateau des Tuileries, nor all the ceremonies of the church, can compensate to the sad Parisians for the absence of the plays. To fill up the time and vary the amusement, this parade at Long Champs was invented. It continues three days ; the place is about one mile from hence ; it is a fine plain, upon each side of which are rows of trees, like Germantown woods. Here the Parisians appear with their superb equipage, drawn by six fleet coursers, their horses and servants gaily dressed. All kinds of carriages, from

the clumsy fiacre to the gilded chariot, are to be seen here, as well as many gentlemen on horseback, and swarms of people on foot. The city guards make no small part of the show, for the *maréchaussée*, as they are called, are placed along in rows between the carriages, and are as despotic as their master: not a coach dares go an inch from its rank, nor one carriage force itself before another; so that, notwithstanding there are many thousands collected upon this occasion, you see no disorder. But after all, it is a senseless, foolish parade, at which I believe I shall never again assist.

Your cousin, who I hope will have the happiness to deliver you this, will tell you so much about us, that less writing will be necessary for me than on many other occasions; he cannot, however, say that I feel myself happier here than I used to do, at the humble cottage at the foot of the hill. I wish the dimensions of that was enlarged, because I see no prospect of a more convenient one, and I hope to rejoice there with my friends at some future day. I think I am not unlike the nun who used once a year to be permitted to make an excursion into the world: half the year she diverted herself by recounting the pleasures she had met with, and the other by those she expected.

I shall have some regret, I assure you, in quitting Auteuil, since I must leave it for London, instead of America, that being the destination which Congress has assigned us. The trees in the garden are putting out their verdure, and the flowers springing into life: the song of the nightingale, too, regales me, as I walk under the trees whose thick branches intertwined form a shade which screens you from the rays of the sun. I shall mourn my garden more than any other object which I leave. In many respects, I think I shall feel myself happier in London; but that will depend much upon our reception there, and the course which politics take. If that is not agreeable we shall return so much the sooner to America. It is a long time since I had a line from you, and I believe I have brought you very deep in debt. I have sent you some flower seeds: you will not get them early

enough for the present season, but plant and preserve them next year, that I may find them blooming when I return, and be so good as to give some of them to Mrs. Warren.

Believe me, my dear girl,

Most affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 8 May, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

CAN my dear sister realize that it is near eleven months since I left her? To me it seems incredible; more like a dream than a reality. Yet it ought to appear the longest ten months of my life, if I were to measure the time by the variety of objects which have occupied my attention; but, amidst them all, my heart returns, like the dove of Noah, and rests only in my native land. I never thought myself so selfish a being as since I have become a traveller; for, although I see nature around me in a much higher state of cultivation than our own country can boast, and elegance of taste and manners in a thousand forms, I cannot feel interested in them; it is vain for me, that here

“kind Nature wakes her genial power,  
Suckles each herb, and nurtures every flower.”

'T is true the garden yields a rich profusion; but they are neither plants of my hands, nor children of my care. I have bought a little bird lately, and I really think I feel more attached to that, than to any object out of my own family, animate or inanimate. Yet I do not consider myself in the predicament of a poor fellow, who, not having a house in which to put his head, took up his abode in the stable of a gentleman; but, though so very poor, he kept a dog with whom he daily divided the small portion of food which he



earned. Upon being asked why, when he found it so difficult to live himself, he still kept a dog ; “ What,” says the poor fellow, “ part with my dog ! Why, whom should I have to love me then ? ” You can never feel the force of this reply unless you were to go into a foreign country without being able to speak the language of it. I could not have believed, if I had not experienced it, how strong the love of country is in the human mind. Strangers from all parts of the country, who visit us, feel more nearly allied than the most intimate acquaintance I have in Europe. Before this will reach you, you will have learnt our destination to England. Whether it will prove a more agreeable situation than the present, will depend much upon the state of politics. We must first go to Holland to arrange our affairs there, and to take leave of that Court. I shall wish to be moving as soon as my family lessens, it will be so lonesome. We have as much company in a formal way as our revenues will admit ; and Mr. Jefferson, with one or two Americans, visits us in the social, friendly way. I shall really regret to leave Mr. Jefferson ; he is one of the choice ones of the earth. On Thursday, I dined with him at his house. On Sunday, he is to dine here. On Monday, we all dine with the Marquis ; and on Thursday we dine with the Swedish Ambassador, one of the most agreeable men, and the politest gentleman I have met with. He lives like a prince. I know you love to know all my movements, which makes me so particular to you.

I have many affairs upon me at present. What with my son's going away, my own adjustments for a final leave of this country, many things must pass through my hands ; but I am the less anxious to write, as your nephew will tell you all about us. You will think I ought to have written you more now ; but I am almost sick of my pen, and I know you will see what I write to others. I will not, however, close until the day before he quits the house.

10 May.

To-morrow morning my son takes his departure for

America, and we go next week to England. I have nothing further to add, than my regards to Mr. Cranch, and a desire that you would let me hear from you by every opportunity. I shall lose part and the greatest part of American intelligence by quitting France ; for no person is so well informed from all the States as the Marquis de la Fayette. He has established a correspondence in all the States, and has the newspapers from every quarter.

Adieu.

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

Auteuil, 10 May, 1785.

DID you ever, my dear Betsey, see a person in real life — such as your imagination formed of Sir Charles Grandison ? The Baron de Staël, the Swedish Ambassador, comes nearest to that character, in his manners and personal appearance, of any gentleman I ever saw. The first time I saw him, I was prejudiced in his favor, for his countenance commands your good opinion : it is animated, intelligent, sensible, affable, and, without being perfectly beautiful, is most perfectly agreeable ; add to this a fine figure, and who can fail in being charmed with the Baron de Staël ? He lives in a grand hotel, and his suite of apartments, his furniture, and his table, are the most elegant of any thing I have seen. Although you dine upon plate in every noble house in France, I cannot say that you may see your face in it ; but here the whole furniture of the table, was burnished, and shone with regal splendor. Seventy thousand livres in plate will make no small figure ; and that is what His Majesty gave him. The dessert was served on the richest china, with knives, forks, and spoons of gold. As you enter his apartments, you pass through files of servants, into his anti-chamber, in which is a throne covered with green velvet, upon which is a chair of state, over which hangs the picture

of his royal master. These thrones are common to all ambassadors of the first order, as they are the immediate representatives of the king. Through this anti-chamber, you pass into the grand saloon, which is elegantly adorned with architecture; a beautiful lustre hanging from the middle. Settees, chairs, and hangings of the richest silk, embroidered with gold; marble slabs upon fluted pillars, round which wreaths of artificial flowers in gold intertwine. It is usual to find in all houses of fashion, as in this, several dozens of chairs, all of which have stuffed backs and cushions, standing in double rows round the rooms. The dining-room was equally beautiful, being hung with Gobelin tapestry, the colors and figures of which resemble the most elegant painting. In this room, were hair-bottom mahogany-backed chairs, and the first I have seen since I came to France. Two small statues of a Venus de Medicis, and a Venus de — (ask Miss Paine for the other name), were upon the mantelpiece. The latter, however, was the most modest of the kind, having something like a loose robe thrown partly over her. From the Swedish Ambassador's, we went to visit the Duchess d'Enville, who is mother to the Duke de Rochefoucault. We found the old lady sitting in an easy-chair; around her sat a circle of Academicians, and by her side a young lady. Your uncle presented us, and the old lady rose, and, as usual, gave us a salute. As she had no paint, I could put up with it; but when she approached your cousin, I could think of nothing but Death taking hold of Hebe. The Duchess is near eighty, very tall and lean. She was dressed in a silk chemise, with very large sleeves, coming half way down her arm, a large cape, no stays, a black velvet girdle round her waist, some very rich lace in her chemise, round her neck, and in her sleeves; but the lace was not sufficient to cover the upper part of her neck, which old Time had harrowed; she had no cap on, but a little black gauze bonnet, which did not reach her ears, and tied under her chin; her venerable white hairs in full view. The dress of old women and young girls in this country is *detestable*, to speak in the



French style ; the latter, at the age of seven, being clothed exactly like a woman of twenty, and the former have such a fantastical appearance, that I cannot endure it. The old lady has all the vivacity of a young one. She is the most learned woman in France ; her house is the resort of all men of literature, with whom she converses upon the most abstruse subjects. She is of one of the most ancient, as well as the richest families in the kingdom. She asked very archly when Dr. Franklin was going to America. Upon being told, says she, "I have heard that he is a prophet there ;" alluding to that text of Scripture, "a prophet is not without honor," &c. It was her husband who commanded the fleet which once spread such terror in our country.

Thus you have my yesterday's entertainment. The only pleasure which I shall feel to-day, is that which I have taken in writing to you this morning. I forgot to mention, that several persons of high rank dined with us yesterday ; but not one of them can claim a stroke of my pen after the Baron de Staël. Adieu, my dear Betsey ; your cousin leaves us in a few hours, and I will gratify myself in thinking that he is going to his friends. May Heaven bless him, and prosper his voyage.

Yours, affectionately,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, Bath Hotel, Westminster, 24 June, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE been here a month without writing a single line to my American friends. About the 28th of May we reached London, and expected to have gone into our old quiet lodgings at the Adelphi ; but we found every hotel full. The sitting of Parliament, the birth-day of the King, and the famous celebration of the music of Handel at Westminster

Abbey had drawn together such a concourse of people, that we were glad to get into lodgings at the moderate price of a guinea per day, for two rooms and two chambers at the Bath Hotel, Westminster, Piccadilly, where we yet are. This being the Court end of the city, it is the resort of a vast concourse of carriages. It is too public and noisy for pleasure ; but necessity is without law. The ceremony of presentation, upon one week to the King, and the next to the Queen, was to take place, after which I was to prepare for mine. It is customary, upon presentation, to receive visits from all the foreign ministers ; so that we could not exchange our lodgings for more private ones, as we might and should, had we been only in a private character. The foreign ministers and several English lords and earls, have paid their compliments here, and all hitherto is civil and polite. I was a fortnight, all the time I could get, looking at different houses, but could not find any one fit to inhabit under £200, besides the taxes, which mount up to £50 or £60. At last, my good genius carried me to one in Grosvenor Square, which was not let, because the person who had the care of it could let it only for the remaining lease, which was one year and three quarters. The price, which is not quite £200, the situation, and all together, induced us to close the bargain, and I have prevailed upon the person who lets it to paint two rooms, which will put it into decent order ; so that, as soon as our furniture comes, I shall again commence housekeeping. Living at a hotel is, I think, more expensive than housekeeping, in proportion to what one has for his money. We have never had more than two dishes at a time upon our table, and have not pretended to ask any company, and yet we live at a greater expense than twenty-five guineas per week. The wages of servants, horse-hire, house-rent, and provisions are much dearer here than in France. Servants of various sorts, and for different departments, are to be procured ; their characters are to be inquired into, and this I take upon me, even to the coachman. You can hardly form an idea how much I miss my son on this, as well as on many other accounts ;

but I cannot bear to trouble Mr. Adams with any thing of a domestic kind, who, from morning until evening, has sufficient to occupy all his time. You can have no idea of the petitions, letters, and private applications for assistance, which crowd our doors. Every person represents his case as dismal. Some may really be objects of compassion, and some we assist; but one must have an inexhaustible purse to supply them all. Besides, there are so many gross impositions practised, as we have found in more instances than one, that it would take the whole of a person's time to trace all their stories. Many pretend to have been American soldiers, some to have served as officers. A most glaring instance of falsehood, however, Colonel Smith<sup>1</sup> detected in a man of these pretensions, who sent to Mr. Adams from the King's Bench prison, and modestly desired five guineas; a qualified cheat, but evidently a man of letters and abilities; but, if it is to continue in this way, a galley slave would have an easier task.

The Tory venom has begun to spit itself forth in the public papers, as I expected, bursting with envy that an American Minister should be received here with the same marks of attention, politeness, and civility, which are shown to the ministers of any other power. When a minister delivers his credentials to the King, it is always in his private closet, attended only by the Minister for foreign Affairs, which is called a private audience, and the minister presented makes some little address to his Majesty, and the same ceremony to the Queen, whose reply was in these words; "Sir, I thank you for your civility to me and my family, and I am glad to see you in this country;" then she very politely inquired whether he had got a house yet. The answer of his Majesty was much longer; but I am not at liberty to say more respecting it, than that it was civil and polite, and that his Majesty said he was glad the choice of his country had fallen upon him. The news-liars know nothing of the matter; they represent it just to answer their purpose. Last Thursday, Colonel

<sup>1</sup> This gentleman was, by Congress appointed Secretary of Legation to Mr. Adams upon this mission; and, not long after, married his daughter.



Smith was presented at Court, and to-morrow, at the Queen's circle, my ladyship and your niece make our compliments. There is no other presentation in Europe, in which I should feel so much as in this. Your own reflections will easily suggest the reasons.

I have received a very friendly and polite visit from the Countess of Effingham. She called, and not finding me at home, left a card. I returned her visit; but was obliged to do it by leaving my card too, as she was gone out of town; but, when her Ladyship returned, she sent her compliments and word, that if agreeable she would take a dish of tea with me, and named her day. She accordingly came, and appeared a very polite, sensible woman. She is about forty, a good person, though a little masculine, elegant in her appearance, very easy and social. The Earl of Effingham is too well remembered<sup>1</sup> by America to need any particular recital of his character. His mother is first lady to the Queen. When her Ladyship took leave, she desired I would let her know the day I would favor her with a visit, as she should be loth to be absent. She resides, in summer, a little distance from town. The Earl is a member of Parliament, which obliges him now to be in town, and she usually comes with him, and resides at a hotel a little distance from this.

I find a good many ladies belonging to the Southern States here, many of whom have visited me; I have exchanged visits with several, yet neither of us have met. The custom is, however, here much more agreeable than in France, for it is as with us; the stranger is first visited.

The ceremony of presentation here is considered as indispensable. There are four minister-plenipotentiaries' ladies here; but one ambassador, and he has no lady. In France, the ladies of ambassadors only are presented. One is obliged here to attend the circles of the Queen, which are held in summer once a fortnight, but once a week the rest

<sup>1</sup> On account of his resigning his commission in the British army, rather than serve against America. See his letter in "The Remembrancer," for 1775, p. 263.

of the year ; and what renders it exceedingly expensive is, that you cannot go twice the same season in the same dress, and a Court dress you cannot make use of anywhere else. I directed my mantuamaker to let my dress be elegant, but plain as I could possibly appear, with decency ; accordingly, it is white lutestring, covered and full trimmed with white crape, festooned with lilac ribbon and mock point lace, over a hoop of enormous extent ; there is only a narrow train of about three yards in length to the gown waist, which is put into a ribbon upon the left side, the Queen only having her train borne. Ruffle cuffs for married ladies, treble lacé ruffles, a very dress cap with long lace lappets, two white plumes, and a blonde lace handkerchief. This is my rigging. I should have mentioned two pearl pins in my hair, ear-rings and necklace of the same kind.

Thursday Morning.

My head is dressed for St. James's, and in my opinion, looks very tasty. Whilst my daughter's is undergoing the same operation, I set myself down composedly to write you a few lines. " Well," methinks I hear Betsey and Lucy say, " what is cousin's dress ? " White, my dear girls, like your aunt's, only differently trimmed and ornamented ; her train being wholly of white crape, and trimmed with white ribbon ; the petticoat, which is the most showy part of the dress, covered and drawn up in what are called festoons, with light wreaths of beautiful flowers ; the sleeves white crape, drawn over the silk, with a row of lace round the sleeve near the shoulder, another half way down the arm, and a third upon the top of the ruffle, a little flower stuck between ; a kind of hat-cap, with three large feathers and a bunch of flowers ; a wreath of flowers upon the hair. Thus equipped, we go in our own carriage, and Mr. Adams and Colonel Smith in his. But I must quit my pen to put myself in order for the ceremony, which begins at two o'clock. When I return, I will relate to you my reception ; but do not let it circulate, as there may be persons eager to



catch at every thing, and as much given to misrepresentation as here. I would gladly be excused the ceremony.

Friday Morning.

Congratulate me, my dear sister, it is over. I was too much fatigued to write a line last evening. At two o'clock we went to the circle, which is in the drawing-room of the Queen. We passed through several apartments, lined as usual with spectators upon these occasions. Upon entering the ante-chamber, the Baron de Lynden, the Dutch Minister, who has been often here, came and spoke with me. A Count Sarsfield, a French nobleman, with whom I was acquainted, paid his compliments. As I passed into the drawing-room, Lord Carmarthen and Sir Clement Cotterel Dormer were presented to me. Though they had been several times here, I had never seen them before. The Swedish and the Polish ministers made their compliments, and several other gentlemen; but not a single lady did I know until the Countess of Effingham came, who was very civil. There were three young ladies, daughters of the Marquis of Lothian, who were to be presented at the same time, and two brides. We were placed in a circle round the drawing-room, which was very full, I believe two hundred persons present. Only think of the task! The royal family have to go round to every person, and find small talk enough to speak to all of them, though they very prudently speak in a whisper, so that only the person who stands next you can hear what is said. The King enters the room, and goes round to the right; the Queen and Princesses to the left. The lord in waiting presents you to the King; and the lady in waiting does the same to her Majesty. The King is a personable man, but, my dear sister, he has a certain countenance, which you and I have often remarked; a red face and white eyebrows. The Queen has a similar countenance, and the numerous royal family confirm the observation. Persons are not placed according to their rank in the drawing-room, but promiscuously; and when the King comes in, he takes persons as they stand. When



he came to me, Lord Onslow said, "Mrs. Adams;" upon which I drew off my right-hand glove, and his Majesty saluted my left cheek; then asked me if I had taken a walk to-day. I could have told his Majesty that I had been all the morning preparing to wait upon him; but I replied, "No, Sire." "Why, do n't you love walking?" says he. I answered, that I was rather indolent in that respect. He then bowed, and passed on. It was more than two hours after this before it came to my turn to be presented to the Queen. The circle was so large that the company were four hours standing. The Queen was evidently embarrassed when I was presented to her. I had disagreeable feelings too. She, however, said, "Mrs. Adams, have you got into your house? Pray, how do you like the situation of it?" Whilst the Princess Royal looked compassionate, and asked me if I was not much fatigued; and observed, that it was a very full drawing-room. Her sister, who came next, Princess Augusta, after having asked your niece if she was ever in England before, and her answering "Yes," inquired of me how long ago, and supposed it was when she was very young. And all this is said with much affability, and the ease and freedom of old acquaintance. The manner, in which they make their tour round the room is, first, the Queen, the lady in waiting behind her, holding up her train; next to her, the Princess Royal; after her, Princess Augusta, and their lady in waiting behind them. They are pretty, rather than beautiful, well shaped, with fair complexions, and a tincture of the King's countenance. The two sisters look much alike; they were both dressed in black and silver silk, with a silver netting upon the coat, and their heads full of diamond pins. The Queen was in purple and silver. She is not well shaped nor handsome. As to the ladies of the Court, rank and title may compensate for want of personal charms; but they are, in general, very plain, ill-shaped, and ugly; but do n't you tell anybody that I say so. If one wants to see beauty, one must go to Ranelagh; there it is collected, in one bright constellation. There were two ladies very elegant, at Court, — Lady Salisbury and Lady

Talbot; but the observation did not in general hold good, that fine feathers make fine birds. I saw many who were vastly richer dressed than your friends, but I will venture to say, that I saw none neater or more elegant; which praise I ascribe to the taste of Mrs. Temple and my mantuamaker; for, after having declared that I would not have any foil or tinsel about me, they fixed upon the dress I have described. Mrs. Temple is my near neighbour, and has been very friendly to me. Mr. Temple, you know, is deaf, so that I cannot hold much conversation with him.

The Tories are very free with their compliments. Scarcely a paper escapes without some scurrility. We bear it with silent contempt; having met a polite reception from the Court, it bites them like a serpent, and stings them like an adder. As to the success the negotiations may meet with, time alone can disclose the result; but, if this nation does not suffer itself to be again duped by the artifice of some and the malice of others, it will unite itself with America on the most liberal principles and sentiments.

Captain Dashwood come? Why, I have not half done. I have not told your aunt yet, that, whilst I was writing, I received her thrice-welcome letters, and from my dear cousins too, aunt Shaw and all; nor how sometimes I laughed, and sometimes I cried. Yet there was nothing sorrowful in the letters, only they were too tender for me. What, not time to say I will write to all of them as soon as possible? Why, I know they will all think I ought to write; but how is it possible? Let them think what I have had to do, and what I have had to accomplish, as my furniture is come, and will be landed to-morrow. Eat the sweetmeats. Divide them amongst you, and the choicest sweetmeat of all I shall have in thinking that you enjoy them.

I went last evening, to Ranelagh; but I must reserve that story for the young folk. You see I am in haste.

Believe me most tenderly yours,

A. A.

TO MRS. SHAW.

London, (Grosvenor Square,) 15 August, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE been situated here for nearly six weeks. It is one of the finest squares in London. The air is as pure as it can be so near a great city. It is but a small distance from Hyde Park, round which I sometimes walk, but oftener ride. It resembles Boston Common, much larger, and more beautified with trees. On one side of it is a fine river. St. James's Park and Kensington Gardens are two other fashionable walks, which I am very sensible I ought to improve oftener than I do. One wants society in these places. Mrs. Temple is the only person near me with whom I can use the freedom of calling upon her to ride or walk with me, and her, to my no small regret, I am going to lose. Mrs. Hay resides out at Hampstead, about four miles from London. We visit, but they have such a paltry custom of dining here at night, that it ruins that true American sociability which *only* I delight in. Polite circles are much alike throughout Europe. Swift's "Journal of a Modern Lady," though written sixty years ago, is perfectly applicable to the present day; and, though noted as the changeable sex, in this scene of dissipation they have been steady. I shall never have much society with this kind of people, for they would not like me any more than I do them. They think much more of their titles here than in France. It is not unusual to find people of the highest rank there, the best bred and the politest people. If they have an equal share of pride, they know better how to hide it. Until I came here, I had no idea what a national and illiberal inveteracy the English have against their better behaved neighbours, and I feel a much greater partiality for them than I did whilst I resided among them. I would recommend to this nation a little more liberality and discernment; their contracted sentiments lead them to despise all other nations.



Perhaps I should be chargeable with the same narrow sentiments, if I give America the preference over these old European nations. In the cultivation of the arts and improvement in manufactures, they greatly excel us; but we have native genius, capacity, and ingenuity, equal to all their improvements, and much more general knowledge diffused amongst us. You can scarcely form an idea how much superior our common people, as they are termed, are to those of the same rank in this country. Neither have we that servility of manners, which the distinction between nobility and citizens gives to the people of this country. We tremble not, either at the sight or name of majesty. I own that I never felt myself in a more contemptible situation, than when I stood four hours together for a gracious smile from majesty, a witness to the anxious solicitude of those around me for the same mighty *boon*. I however had a more dignified honor, as his Majesty *deigned to salute me*. I have not been since to the drawing-room, but propose going to the next. As the company are chiefly out of town, the ceremony will not be so tedious.

As to politics, the English continue to publish the most abusive, barefaced falsehoods against America that you can conceive of; yet, glaring as they are, they gain credit here, and they shut their eyes against a friendly and liberal intercourse. Yet their very existence depends upon a friendly union with us. How the pulse of the ministry beats, time will unfold; but I do not promise or wish to myself a long continuance here. Such is the temper of the two nations towards each other, that, if we have not peace, we must have war. We cannot resign the intercourse, and quit each other. I hope, however, that it will not come to that alternative. Adieu.

Your sister,  
A. A.

TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

London, (Grosvenor Square,) 27 August, 1755.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I HAVE not yet noticed your obliging favor of April 26th, which reached me by Captain Lyde, whilst I was at the Bath Hotel. I had then so much upon my hands, that I did not get time to write but to your mamma and cousin, who I hope is with you before now. By him I wrote many letters, and amongst the number of my friends, my dear Lucy was not omitted.

If I did not believe my friends were partial to all I write, I should sometimes feel discouraged when I take my pen; for, amongst so large a number of correspondents, I feel at a loss how to supply them all.

It is usual at a large entertainment, to bring the solid food in the first course. The second consists of lighter diet, kickshaws, trifles, whip syllabub, &c. ; the third is the desert, consisting of the fruits of the season, and sometimes foreign sweetmeats. If it would not be paying my letters too great a compliment to compare any of them to solid food, I should feel no reluctance at keeping up the metaphor with respect to the rest. Yet it is not the studied sentence nor the elaborate period, which pleases, but the genuine sentiments of the heart expressed with simplicity. All the specimens, which have been handed down to us as models for letter-writing, teach us that natural ease is the greatest beauty of it. It is that native simplicity too, which gives to the Scotch songs a merit superior to all others. My favorite Scotch song, "There's na luck about the house," will naturally occur to your mind.

I believe Richardson has done more towards embellishing the present age, and teaching them the talent of letter-writing, than any other modern I can name. You know I am passionately fond of all his works, even to his "Pamela." In the simplicity of our manners, we judge that many of

his descriptions and some of his characters are beyond real life ; but those, who have been conversant in these old corrupted countries, will be soon convinced that Richardson painted only the truth in his abandoned characters ; and nothing beyond what human nature is capable of attaining, and frequently has risen to, in his amiable portraits. Richardson was master of the human heart ; he studied and copied nature ; he has shown the odiousness of vice, and the fatal consequences which result from the practice of it ; he has painted virtue in all her amiable attitudes ; he never loses sight of religion, but points his characters to a future state of restitution as the sure ground of safety to the virtuous, and excludes not hope from the wretched penitent. The oftener I have read his books, and the more I reflect upon his great variety of characters, perfectly well supported, the more I am led to love and admire the author. He must have an abandoned, wicked, and depraved heart, who can be tempted to vice by the perusal of Richardson's works. Indeed, I know not how a person can read them without being made better by them, as they dispose the mind to receive and relish every good and benevolent principle. He may have faults, but they are so few, that they ought not to be named in the brilliant clusters of beauties which ornament his works. The human mind is an active principle, always in search of some gratification ; and those writings which tend to elevate it to the contemplation of truth and virtue, and to teach it that it is capable of rising to higher degrees of excellence than the mere gratification of sensual appetites and passions, contribute to promote its mental pleasures, and to advance the dignity of our natures. Sir Joshua Reynolds's observations with respect to painting may be applied to all those works which tend to refine the taste, " which, if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates, at least, their greatest depravation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony, which, began by taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in virtue."



Why may we not suppose, that, the higher our attainments in knowledge and virtue are here on earth, the more nearly we assimilate ourselves to that order of beings who now rank above us in the world of spirits? We are told in scripture, that there are different kinds of glory, and that one star differeth from another. Why should not those who have distinguished themselves by superior excellence over their fellow-mortals continue to preserve their rank when admitted to the kingdom of the just? Though the estimation of worth may be very different in the view of the righteous Judge of the world from that which vain man esteems such on earth, yet we may rest assured that justice will be strictly administered to us.

But whither has my imagination wandered? Very distant from my thoughts when I first took my pen.

We have a large company to dine with us to-day, and I have some few arrangements to make before dinner, which obliges me to hasten to a conclusion; among the persons invited, is a gentleman who married the only daughter of Richardson. She died about six months ago. This gentleman has in his possession the only portrait of her father which was ever taken. He has several times invited me to go to his house and see it. I design it, though I have not yet accepted his invitation.

Write to me, my dear Lucy, and be assured I speak the words of truth and soberness when I tell you that your letters give real pleasure to

Your affectionate aunt,

A. A.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

London, (Grosvenor Square,) 2 September, 1785.

MY DEAR BETSEY,

At the Bath Hotel I received my dear niece's letter of April. I have told your sister and other friends why I did not write

them, but I should have no excuse to give if I omitted so good an opportunity as now offers by Mr. Storer.

This day, two months ago, we removed here, where I should be much delighted, if I could have my sisters, my cousins and connexions around me ; but for want of them every country I reside in, lacks a principal ingredient in the composition of my happiness.

London, in the Summer season, is a mere desert ; nobody of consequence resides in it, unless necessitated to by business. I think the gentry quite right in every view to retire to their country seats ; residing upon them is generally a great benefit to the proprietor. Many noblemen expend vast sums, annually, in improving and beautifying their estates. I am told that one must visit some of these manors and lordships to form a just estimate of British grandeur and magnificence. All the villages that I have seen round London are mere gardens, and show what may be effected by culture ; but we must not expect for many years to see America thus improved. Our numbers are few in comparison with our acres, and property is more equally distributed, which is one great reason of our happiness. Industry there is sure to meet with its recompense and to preserve the labourer from famine, from nakedness and from want. The liberal reward which labour meets with in America, is another source of our national prosperity ; population and increasing wealth result from it. The condition of our labouring poor is preferable to that of any other country. Comparatively speaking we have no poor, except those who are publicly supported. America is in her early vigour, in that progressive state, which in reality is the cheerful and flourishing state to all the different orders of society ; it is so to the human constitution, for when once it has reached the meridian, it declines towards the setting sun. But America has much to do ere she arrives at her zenith ; she possesses every requisite to render her the happiest country upon the globe. She has the knowledge and experience of past ages before her ; she was not planted like most other countries by lawless banditti, or an ignorant, savage race who cannot

even trace their origin, but by an enlightened, a religious and polished people. The numerous improvements they have made during a century and a half, in what was then but a howling wilderness, prove their state of civilization. Let me recommend to you, my dear girl, to make yourself perfect mistress of the history of your own country, if you are not so already. No one can be sufficiently thankful for the blessings he enjoys, unless he knows the value of them.

Were you to be a witness to the spectacles of wretchedness and misery which these old countries exhibit, crowded with inhabitants, loaded with taxes, you would shudder at the sight. I never set my foot out, without encountering many objects whose tattered parti-colored garments, hide not half their nakedness, and speak, as Otway expresses it, "variety of wretchedness": covered with disease and starving with hunger they beg, with horror in their countenances. Besides these, what can be said of the wretched victims who are weekly sacrificed upon the gallows in numbers sufficient to astonish a civilized people? I have been credibly informed that hundreds of children from four years and upwards, sleep under the trees, fences and hedges of Hyde Park nightly, having nowhere else to lay their heads; and they subsist by day upon the charity of the passengers. Yet has this country as many public institutions for charitable support of the infirm, as any country can boast; but there must be some essential defect in the government and morals of a people, when punishments lose their efficacy and crimes abound. But I shall make you sick with my picture of wretchedness. Let it excite us to thankfulness, my dear girl, that our lines have fallen to us in a happier land, a land of liberty and virtue, comparatively speaking, and let every one, so far as his sphere of action extends, and none so contracted as to be without some influence, let every one consider it as a duty which he owes to himself, to his country, and to posterity, to practise virtue, to cultivate knowledge and to revere the Deity, as the only means by which not only individuals but a people or a nation can be prosperous and happy. You will think that I have turned preacher; I know



I am not writing to a thoughtless, but to a reflecting, solid young lady, and that shall be my excuse.

How have you advanced in your music? The practice of music to those who have a taste and ear for it, must be one of the most agreeable amusements; it tends to soften and harmonize the passions, to elevate the mind, to raise it from earth to heaven. The most powerful effect of music I ever experienced, was at Westminster Abbey. The place itself is well calculated to excite solemnity, not only from its ancient and venerable appearance, but from the dignified dust, marble and monuments which it contains. Last year it was filled up with seats, and an organ loft sufficiently large to contain six hundred musicians, which were collected from this and other countries. This year the music was repeated. It is called the celebration of Handel's music; the sums collected are deposited, and the income is appropriated to the support of decayed musicians. There were five days set apart for the different performances. I was at the piece called the Messiah, and though a guinea a ticket, I am sure I never spent one with more satisfaction. It is impossible to describe to you the solemnity and dignity of the scene; when it came to that part, the Hallelujah, the whole assembly rose and all the musicians, every person uncovered. Only conceive six hundred voices and instruments perfectly chording in one word and one sound. I could scarcely believe myself an inhabitant of earth. I was one continued shudder from the beginning to the end of the performance. Nine thousand pounds were collected, by which you may judge of the rage that prevailed for the entertainment.

How do all my good friends and old neighbours? Let me hear as often as possible from you; never conceive that your letters are trifling. Nothing which relates to those I love appears so to me. This letter is to go by Mr. Storer, as I told you in the beginning, a smart youth for some of you, and what is better, a virtuous and good young man. We are sorry to part with him, for he is quite domesticated with us; but we hope he will be benefited by the exchange; it is time for him to be some way fixed in a profession for life. He

thinks of Divinity ; and now I am talking of Divinity, I will inquire after my friend Mr. Wibird, and chide you all for never mentioning him, for I have seen him twenty times, since my absence, come up your yard and enter the house, and inquire, (after having thrown aside his cloak) “ Well, have you heard from your Aunt ? What does she say and how do they all ? ”

I hope you have seen your cousin before this time, and in your next you must tell me how you like him. You must cure him of some foibles which he has ; he will take it kindly of you, for he is a good youth, only a little too positive. My paper only allows me to say that I am yours,

A. A.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

London, (Grosvenor Square,) 6 September, 1785.

MY DEAR SON,

YESTERDAY being Sunday, I went with your father to the Foundling Church, Dr. Price, whom we usually attend, being absent a few weeks in the country. When I returned from church, I went into my closet and took up my pen, with an intention of writing to you ; but I really felt so *triste* at not having heard of your arrival, that I could not compose myself sufficiently to write to you ; so I scribbled to your brothers. By the time I had finished my letters, I was called to tea. Mr. Brown, the painter, came in and spent part of the evening. I read a sermon in Barrow upon the government of the tongue, and went to bed with one of my old impressions, that letters were near at hand.

This morning went below to breakfast ; the urn was brought up boiling ; the chocolate ready upon the table ; enter Mr. Spiller, the butler, who, by the way, is a very spruce body, and after very respectfully bowing with his hands full, — “ Mr. Church’s compliments to you, Sir, and has brought you this packet, but could not wait upon you to-day, as he was obliged to go out of town.” Up we all

jumped ; your sister seized hold of a letter, and cried, " My brother, my brother ! " We were not long opening and perusing, and " I am so glad," and " I am so glad," was repeated from one to another. Mamma did not fail remarking her old impression. The chocolate grew cold, the top of the tea-pot was forgotten, and the bread and butter went down uneaten. Yet nobody felt the loss of breakfast. So near akin are joy and grief, that the effect is often similar.

Our countrymen have most essentially injured themselves by running here in shoals after the peace, and obtaining a credit which they cannot support. They have so shackled and hampered themselves, that they cannot extricate themselves. Merchants, who have given credit, are now suffering, and that naturally creates ill-will and hard words. His Majesty and the ministry show every personal respect and civility which we have any right to expect. The Marquis de la Fayette writes, that he had always heard his Majesty was a great dissembler, but he never was so thoroughly convinced of it as by the reception given to the American Minister. I wish their conduct with regard to our country was of a piece with that which they have shown to its representative. The Marquis of Carmarthen and Mr. Pitt appear to possess the most liberal ideas with respect to us, of any part of the ministry. With regard to the negroes, they are full and clear that they ought to be paid for ; but, as to the posts, they say the relinquishment of them must depend upon certain other matters, which you know they were not at liberty to explain in private conversation ; but it is no doubt they mean to keep them as a security for the payment of the debts, and as a rod over our heads. They think we are as little able to go to war as they are. The budget has not yet been officially opened. A generous treaty has been tendered them, upon which they are now pondering and brewing. The fate of the Irish propositions has thrown weight into the American scale ; but there are so many bones of contention between us, that snarling spirits will foment into rage, and cool ones kindle by repeated irritation. It is astonishing that this nation catch at every



straw which swims, and delude themselves with the bubble that we are weary of our independence, and wish to return under their government again. They are more actuated by these ideas in their whole system toward us, than by any generous plans, which would become them as able statesmen and a great nation. They think to effect their plans by prohibitory acts and heavy duties. A late act has passed, prohibiting the exportation of any tools of any kind. They say they can injure us much more than we can them, and they seem determined to try the experiment. Those who look beyond the present moment, foresee the consequences, that this nation will never leave us until they drive us into power and greatness that will finally shake this kingdom. We must struggle hard first, and find many difficulties to encounter, but we may be a great and a powerful nation if we will. Industry and frugality, wisdom and virtue, must make us so. I think America is taking steps towards a reform, and I know her capable of whatever she undertakes. I hope you will never lose sight of her interests ; but make her welfare your study, and spend those hours, which others devote to cards and folly, in investigating the great principles by which nations have risen to glory and eminence ; for your country will one day call for your services, either in the cabinet or field. Qualify yourself to do honor to her.

You will probably hear, before this reaches you, of the extraordinary affair respecting the Cardinal Rohan. It is said that his confinement is in consequence of his making use of the Queen's name to get a diamond necklace of immense value into his hands. Others say it is in consequence of some reflections cast upon the character of the Queen ; others suppose that the real fact is not known. I send you one newspaper account of the matter, and have not room to add more than that I am

Your affectionate mother,

A. A.

TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 30 September, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

YOUR kind letters of July and August are before me. I thank you most sincerely for the particular manner in which you write. I go along with you, and take an interest in every transaction which concerns those I love; and I enjoy more pleasure from those imaginary scenes than I do from the drawing-room at St. James's. In one, I feel myself your friend and equal. In the other, I know I am looked down upon with a sovereign pride, and the smile of royalty is bestowed as a mighty boon. As such, however, I cannot receive it. I know it is due to my country, and I consider myself as complimenting the power before which I appear as much as I am complimented by being noticed by it. With these ideas, you may be sure my countenance will never wear that suppliant appearance, which begs for notice. Consequently I never expect to be a Court favorite. Nor would I ever again set my foot there, if the etiquette of my country did not require it. But, whilst I am in a public character, I must submit to the penalty; for such I shall ever esteem it.

You will naturally suppose that I have lately been much fatigued. This is very true. I attended the drawing-room last week, upon the anniversary of the coronation of their Majesties. The company were very brilliant, and her Majesty was stiff with diamonds; the three eldest Princesses and the Prince of Wales were present. His Highness looked much better than when I saw him before. He is a stout, well-made man, and would look very well if he had not sacrificed so much to Bacchus. The Princess Elizabeth I never saw before. She is about fifteen; a short, clumsy miss, and would not be thought handsome if she was not a princess. The whole family have one complexion, and all are inclined to be corpulent. I should know them in any

part of the world. Notwithstanding the English boast so much of their beauties, I do not think they have really so much of it as you will find amongst the same proportion of people in America. It is true, that their complexions are undoubtedly fairer than the French, and in general their figure is good. Of this they make the best; but I have not seen a lady in England who can bear a comparison with Mrs. Bingham, Mrs. Platt, and a Miss Hamilton, who is a Philadelphia young lady. Amongst the most celebrated of their beauties stands the Dutchess of Devonshire, who is masculine in her appearance. Lady Salisbury is small and genteel, but her complexion is bad; and Lady Talbot is not a Mrs. Bingham, who, taken altogether, is the finest woman I ever saw. The intelligence of her countenance, or rather, I ought to say animation, the elegance of her form, and the affability of her manners, convert you into admiration; and one has only to lament too much dissipation and frivolity of amusement, which have weaned her from her native country, and given her a passion and thirst after all the luxuries of Europe.

The finest English woman I have seen is the eldest daughter of Mr. Dana, brother to our Mr. Dana; he resides in the country, but was in London with two of his daughters, when I first came here. I saw her first at Ranelagh. I was struck with her appearance, and endeavoured to find who she was; for she appeared like Calypso amongst her nymphs, delicate and modest. She was easily known from the crowd, as a stranger. I had not long admired her, before she was brought by her father and introduced to me, after which she made me a visit, with her sister, who was much out of health. At the same time that she has the best title of any English woman I have seen to the rank of a divinity, I would not have it forgotten that her father is an American, and, as he was remarkably handsome, no doubt she owes a large share of her beauty to him.

I dread to hear from my dear aunt, lest melancholy tidings should reach me with respect to her. She is at the same critical period of life which proved fatal to Mrs. B.



I will, however, hope that she may yet be spared to her friends. Though her health would never permit her to engage in the active business of her family, she was attentive to the interest and welfare of every individual of it. (Like Sarah, she was always to be found in her tent.) A more benevolent heart never inhabited a human breast. It was well matched and seconded in a partner equally benevolent and humane, who has shared with us our former griefs, and will find us equally sympathetic towards himself, should so great a misfortune attend him as I fear. Indeed, I know not how to take my pen to write to him. I do not wonder that your heart was affected, or your spirits low, under the apprehension of losing one so deservedly dear to us all. Should this ornament be broken from the original building, it will be another memento to us of the frailty of the whole, and that duration depends not upon age. Yet who would desire to stand, the last naked pillar of the whole? I believe our social affections strengthen by age; as those objects and amusements which gratified our youthful years lose their relish, the social converse and society of friends becomes more necessary.

“Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give  
To social man true relish of himself.”

But I must close, as I am going to dine to-day with my friend Mrs. Rogers, where I have given myself an invitation, the occasion of which I will reserve for the subject of another letter, and subscribe myself affectionately yours,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 1 October, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I TOLD you in my last, that I was going to dine with my friend Mrs. Rogers. You must know that yesterday the

whole diplomatic corps dined here ; that is, his Lordship the Marquis of Carmarthen, and all the foreign ministers, fifteen in all, and to-day the newspapers proclaim it. I believe they have as many spies here as the police of France. Upon these occasions, no ladies are admitted ; so I wrote a card and begged a dinner, for myself and daughter, of Mrs. Rogers, where I know I am always welcome.

It is customary to send out cards of invitation ten days beforehand. Our cards were gone out, and as good luck would have it, Captain Hay returned from the West Indies and presented us with a noble turtle, weighing a hundred and fourteen pounds, which was dressed upon this occasion. Though it gave us a good deal of pain to receive so valuable a present from them, yet we could not refuse it without affronting them, and it certainly happened at a most fortunate time. On Tuesday, they and a number of our American friends, and some of our *English friends*, for I assure you we have a chosen few of that number, are to dine with us.

This afternoon I have had a visit from Madame Pinto, the lady of the Portuguese minister. They have all visited now, and I have returned their visits ; but this is the only lady that I have seen. She speaks English tolerably, and appears an agreeable woman. She has lately returned to this country, from whence she has been five years absent. The Chevalier de Pinto has been minister here for many years. Some years hence it may be a pleasure to reside here in the character of American minister ; but, with the present salary and the present temper of the English, no one need envy the embassy. There would soon be fine work, if any notice was taken of their Billingsgate and abuse ; but all their arrows rebound, and fall harmless to the ground. Amidst all their falsehoods, they have never insinuated a lisp against the private character of the American minister, nor in his public line charged him with either want of abilities, honor, or integrity. The whole venom has been levelled against poor America ; and every effort to make her appear ridiculous in the eyes of the nation.

How would they exult, if they could lay hold of any circumstance, in either of our characters, to make us appear ridiculous.

I received a letter to-day from Mr. Jefferson, who writes me that he had just received a parcel of English newspapers; they "teem," says he, "with every horror of which nature is capable; assassinations, suicide, thefts, robberies, and, what is worse than thefts, murder, and robbery, the blackest slanders! Indeed, the man must be of rock who can stand all this. To Mr. Adams it will be but one victory the more. It would illy suit me. I do not love difficulties. I am fond of quiet; willing to do my duty; but irritable by slander, and apt to be forced by it to abandon my post. I fancy," says he, "it must be the quantity of animal food eaten by the English, which renders their character unsusceptible of civilization. I suspect that it is in their kitchens, and not in their churches, that their reformation must be worked, and that missionaries from hence would avail more than those who should endeavour to tame them by precepts of religion or philosophy."

But he adds, "What do the foolish printers of America mean by retailing all this stuff in our papers, as if it was not enough to be slandered by one's enemies, without circulating the slanders amongst one's friends too?"

I could tell Mr. Jefferson that I doubt not there are persons in America equally gratified with them as the English, and that from a spirit of envy. But these open attacks are nothing to the secret enemies Mr. Adams has had to encounter. In Mr. Jefferson he has a firm and faithful friend with whom he can consult and advise; and, as each of them has no object but the good of his country in view, they have an unlimited confidence in each other; and they have only to lament that the Channel divides their more frequent intercourse.

You ask me whether I must tarry out three years. Heaven only knows what may be the result of one. If any probability appears of accomplishing any thing, 't is likely we may tarry. I am sure that it will be a labor, if not of love,



yet of much perplexity and difficulty. The immense debt, due from the mercantile part of America to this country, sours this people beyond measure, and greatly distresses thousands, who never were nor ever will be politicians, — the manufacturers, — who supplied the merchants, and depend upon them for remittances. Indeed, I pity their situation. At the same time, I think our countrymen greatly to blame for getting a credit, that many of them have taken no pains to preserve, but have thoughtlessly rioted upon the property of others.

And this, among other things, makes our situation disagreeable, and the path very difficult for negotiation.

Adieu. Yours affectionately,

A. A.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

London, 4 March, 1786.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I SELDOM feel a sufficient stimulus for writing until I hear that a vessel is just about to sail, and then I find myself so deep in debt, that I know not where to begin to discharge the account; but it is time for me to be a little more provident; for, upon looking into my list, I find I have no less than eighteen correspondents, who have demands upon me. One needs to have a more fruitful fund than I am possessed of, to pay half these in sterling bullion. I fear many will find too great a quantity of alloy to be pleased with the traffic.

I think, in one of my letters to you last autumn, I promised to give you some account of the celebrated actress, Mrs. Siddons, whom I was then going to see. You may well suppose my expectations were very high; but her circumstances were such then as prevented her from exerting that force of passion, and that energy of action, which have rendered her so justly celebrated. . . . You will suppose that she ought not to have appeared at all upon the stage. I

should have thought so too, if I had not seen her ; but she had contrived her dress in such a manner as wholly to disguise her situation ; and chose only those tragedies where little exertion was necessary. The first piece I saw her in was Shakspeare's " Othello." She was interesting beyond any actress I had ever seen ; but I lost much of the pleasure of the play, from the sooty appearance of the Moor. Perhaps it may be early prejudice ; but I could not separate the African color from the man, nor prevent that disgust and horror which filled my mind every time I saw him touch the gentle Desdemona ; nor did I wonder that Brabantio thought some love potion or some witchcraft had been practised to make his daughter fall in love with what she scarcely dared to look upon.

I have been more pleased with her since, in several other characters, particularly in Matilda in " The Carmelite," a play which I send you for your amusement. Much of Shakspeare's language is so uncouth that it sounds very harsh. He has beauties which are not equalled ; but I should suppose they might be rendered much more agreeable for the stage by alterations. I saw Mrs. Siddons a few evenings ago in " Macbeth," a play, you recollect, full of horror. She supported her part with great propriety ; but she is too great to be put in so detestable a character. I have not yet seen her in her most pathetic characters, which are Jane Shore, Belvidera in " Venice Preserved," and Isabella in " The Fatal Marriage." For you must make as much interest here to get a box when she plays, as to get a place at Court ; and they are usually obtained in the same way. It would be very difficult to find the thing in this country which money will not purchase, provided you can bribe high enough.

What adds much to the merit of Mrs. Siddons, is her virtuous character ; slander itself never having slurred it. She is married to a man who bears a good character ; but his name and importance are wholly swallowed up in her fame. She is the mother of five children ; but from her looks you would not imagine her more than twenty-five years old. She is happy in having a brother who is one of the best tragic

actors upon the stage, and always plays the capital parts with her ; so that both her husband and the virtuous part of the audience can see them in the tenderest scenes without once fearing for their reputation. I scribble to you upon these subjects, yet fear they do not give you the pleasure I wish to communicate ; for it is with the stage as with Yorick's "Sentimental Journey," — no persons can have an equal relish for it with those who have been in the very places described.

I can, however, inform you of something which will be more interesting to you, because it is the work of one of our own countrymen, and of one of the most important events of the late war. Mr. Trumbull has made a painting of the battle at Charlestown, and the death of General Warren. To speak of its merit I can only say that in looking at it my whole frame contracted, my blood shivered, and I felt a faintness at my heart. He is the first painter who has undertaken to immortalize by his pencil those great actions, that gave birth to our nation. By this means he will not only secure his own fame, but transmit to posterity characters and actions which will command the admiration of future ages, and prevent the period which gave birth to them from ever passing away into the dark abyss of time. At the same time, he teaches mankind that it is not rank, nor titles, but character alone, which interests posterity. Yet, notwithstanding the pencil of a Trumbull and the historic pen of a Gordon and others, many of the component parts of the great whole will finally be lost. Instances of patience, perseverance, fortitude, magnanimity, courage, humanity, and tenderness, which would have graced the Roman character, are known only to those who were themselves the actors, and whose modesty will not suffer them to blazon abroad their own fame. These, however, will be engraven by Yorick's recording angel upon unfading tablets, in that repository, where a just estimate will be made both of principles and actions.

Your letters of September and January I have received with much pleasure, and am happy to find that the partiality of a parent with regard to a very dear son, had not les-



sened him in the eyes of his friends ; for praises are often so many inquisitors, and always a tax where they are lavished. I think I may with justice say, that a due sense of moral obligation, integrity and honor, are the predominant traits of his character ; and these are good foundations, upon which one may reasonably build hopes of future usefulness. The longer I live in the world, and the more I see of mankind, the more deeply I am impressed with the importance and necessity of good principles and virtuous examples being placed before youth, in the most amiable and engaging manner, whilst the mind is uncontaminated, and open to impressions. Yet precept without example is of little avail, for habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles. The "soul's calm sunshine" can result only from the practice of virtue, which is congenial to our natures. If happiness is not the immediate consequence of virtue, as some devotees to pleasure affirm, yet they will find that virtue is the indispensable condition of happiness ; and, as the poet expresses it,

"Peace, O Virtue ! peace is all thy own."

But I will quit this subject, lest my good brother should think I have invaded his province, and subscribe myself

Your sister,

A. A.

TO MISS E. CRANCH.

London, 2 April, 1786.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I THINK, my dear Betsey, that some letter of yours must have failed, as I have none of a later date than that which you sent from Haverhill by Mr. Wilson, by which I find that you are studying music with Miss White. This is an accomplishment much in vogue in this country, and I know of no other civilized country that stands in so much need of

harmonizing as this. That ancient hospitality for which it was once so celebrated, seems to have degenerated into mere ceremony; they have exchanged their humanity for ferocity, and their civility for—fill up the blank; you cannot give it too rough a name.

I believe I once promised to give you an account of that kind of visiting called a ladies' rout. There are two kinds; one where a lady sets apart a particular day in the week to see company. These are held only five months in the year, it being quite out of fashion to be seen in London during the summer. When a lady returns from the country she goes round and leaves a card with all her acquaintance, and then sends them an invitation to attend her routs during the season. The other kind is where a lady sends to you for certain evenings, and the cards are always addressed in her own name, both to gentlemen and ladies. The rooms are all set open, and card-tables set in each room, the lady of the house receiving her company at the door of the drawing-room, where a set number of courtesies are given and received, with as much order as is necessary for a soldier who goes through the different evolutions of his exercise. The visiter then proceeds into the room without appearing to notice any other person, and takes her seat at the card table.

“Nor can the muse her aid impart,  
Unskilled in all the terms of art,  
Nor in harmonious numbers put  
The deal, the shuffle, and the cut;  
Go, Tom, and light the ladies up,  
It must be one before we sup.”

At these parties it is usual for each lady to play a rubber, as it is termed, when you must lose or win a few guineas. To give each a fair chance, the lady then rises and gives her seat to another set. It is no unusual thing to have your rooms so crowded that not more than half the company can sit at once, yet this is called *society and polite life*. They treat their company with coffee, tea, lemonade, orgeat and cake. I know of but one agreeable circumstance attending

these parties, which is, that you may go away when you please without disturbing anybody. I was early in the winter invited to Madame de Pinto's, the Portuguese minister's. I went accordingly. There were about two hundred persons present. I knew not a single lady but by sight, having met them at Court; and it is an established rule, that though you were to meet as often as three nights in the week, never to speak together, or know each other, unless particularly introduced. I was, however, at no loss for conversation, Madame de Pinto being very polite, and the Foreign Ministers being the most of them present, who had dined with us, and to whom I had been early introduced. It being *Sunday* evening, I declined playing cards; indeed, I always get excused when I can. And Heaven forbid I should

“catch the manners living as they rise.”

Yet I must submit to a party or two of this kind. Having attended several, I must return the compliment in the same way. Yesterday we dined at Mrs. Paradise's. I refer you to Mr. Storer for an account of this family. (Mr. Jefferson, Colonel Smith, the Prussian and Venetian Ministers, were of the company, and several other persons who were strangers. At eight o'clock we returned home in order to dress ourselves for the ball at the French ambassador's, to which we had received an invitation a fortnight before. He has been absent ever since our arrival here, till three weeks ago. He has a levee every Sunday evening, at which there are usually several hundred persons. The Hotel de France is beautifully situated, fronting St. James's Park, one end of the house standing upon Hyde Park. It is a most superb building. About half past nine, we went and found some company collected. Many very brilliant ladies of the first distinction were present. The dancing commenced about ten, and the rooms soon filled. The room which he had built for this purpose is large enough for five or six hundred persons. It is most elegantly decorated, hung with a gold tissue, ornamented with twelve brilliant cut lustres, each containing twenty-four candles. At one end there are two



large arches ; these were adorned with wreaths and bunches of artificial flowers upon the walls ; in the alcoves were cornucopiæ loaded with oranges, sweetmeats, &c. Coffee, tea, lemonade, orgeat, &c. were taken here by every person who chose to go for them. There were covered seats all round the room for those who did not choose to dance. In the other rooms, card-tables, and a large faro-table, were set : this is a new kind of game, which is much practised here. Many of the company who did not dance, retired here to amuse themselves. The whole style of the house and furniture is such as becomes the ambassador from one of the first monarchies in Europe. He had twenty thousand guineas allowed him in the first instance to furnish his house, and an annual salary of ten thousand more. He has agreeably blended the magnificence and splendor of France with the neatness and elegance of England. Your cousin had unfortunately taken a cold a few days before, and was very unfit to go out. She appeared so unwell that about *one* we retired without staying supper, the sight of which only I regretted, as it was in a style, no doubt, superior to any thing I have seen. The Prince of Wales came about eleven o'clock. Mrs. Fitzherbert was also present, but I could not distinguish her. But who is this lady ? methinks I hear you say. She is a lady to whom, against the laws of the realm, the Prince of Wales is privately married, as is universally believed. She appears with him in all public parties, and he avows his marriage wherever he dares. They have been the topic of conversation in all companies for a long time, and it is now said that a young George may be expected in the course of the summer. She was a widow of about thirty-two years of age, whom he a long time persecuted in order to get her upon his own terms ; but finding he could not succeed, he quieted her conscience by matrimony, which, however valid in the eye of Heaven, is set aside by the laws of the land, which forbids a prince of the blood to marry a subject. As to dresses, I believe I must leave them to be described to your sister. I am sorry I have nothing better to send you than a sash and a vandyke

ribbon. The narrow is to put round the edge of a hat, or you may trim whatever you please with it. I have enclosed for you a poem of Colonel Humphreys. Some parts you will find, perhaps, too high seasoned. If I had observed it before publication, I know he would have altered it. When you write again, tell me whether my fruit trees in the garden bear fruit, and whether you raised any flowers from the seeds I sent you. Oh! I long to be with you again; but, my dear girl, your cousin — must I leave her behind me? Yes, it must be so; but then I leave her in honorable hands. Adieu. I have only room to say

Your affectionate aunt,

A. A.

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TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

London, 2 April, 1786.

YOUR kind letter, my dear niece, was received with much pleasure. These tokens of love and regard which I know flow from the heart, always find their way to mine, and give me a satisfaction and pleasure beyond any thing which the ceremony and pomp of courts and kingdoms can afford. The social affections are and may be made the truest channels for our pleasures and comforts to flow through. Heaven formed us not for ourselves but others,

“And bade self-love and social be the same.”

Perhaps there is no country where there is a fuller exercise of those virtues than ours at present exhibits, which is in a great measure owing to the equal distribution of property, the small number of inhabitants in proportion to its territory, the equal distribution of justice to the poor as well as the rich, to a government founded in justice and exercised with impartiality, and to a religion which teaches peace and good will to man; to knowledge and learning

being so easily acquired and so universally distributed ; and to that sense of moral obligation which generally inclines our countrymen to do to others as they would that others should do to them. Perhaps you will think that I allow to them more than they deserve, but you will consider that I am only speaking comparatively. Human nature is much the same in all countries, but it is the government, the laws, and religion, which form the character of a nation. Wherever luxury abounds, there you will find corruption and degeneracy of manners. Wretches that we are, thus to misuse the bounties of Providence, to forget the hand that blesses us, and even deny the source from whence we derived our being.

But I grow too serious. To amuse you then, my dear niece, I will give you an account of the dress of the ladies at the ball of the Comte d'Adhémar ; as your cousin tells me that she some time ago gave you a history of the birthday and ball at Court, this may serve as a counterpart. Though, should I attempt to compare the apartments, St. James's would fall as much short of the French Ambassador's, as the Court of his Britannic Majesty does of the splendor and magnificence of that of his Most Christian Majesty. I am sure I never saw an assembly room in America, which did not exceed that at St. James's in point of elegance and decoration ; and, as to its fair visitors, not all their blaze of diamonds, set off with Parisian rouge, can match the blooming health, the sparkling eye, and modest deportment of the dear girls of my native land. As to the dancing, the space they had to move in gave them no opportunity to display the grace of a minuet, and the full dress of long court-trains and enormous hoops, you well know were not favorable for country dances, so that I saw them at every disadvantage ; not so the other evening. They were much more properly clad ; — silk waists, gauze or white or painted tiffany coats decorated with ribbon, beads or flowers, as fancy directed, were chiefly worn by the young ladies. Hats turned up at the sides with diamond loops and buttons of steel, large bows of ribbons and



wreaths of flowers, displayed themselves to much advantage upon the heads of some of the prettiest girls England can boast. The light from the lustres is more favorable to beauty than daylight, and the color acquired by dancing, more becoming than rouge, as fancy dresses are more favorable to youth than the formality of a uniform. There was as great a variety of pretty dresses, borrowed wholly from France, as I have ever seen; and amongst the rest, some with sapphire-blue satin waists, spangled with silver, and laced down the back and seams with silver stripes; white satin petticoats trimmed with black and blue velvet ribbon; an odd kind of head-dress, which they term the "helmet of Minerva." I did not observe the bird of wisdom, however, nor do I know whether those who wore the dress had suitable pretensions to it. "And pray," say you, "how were my aunt and cousin dressed?" If it will gratify you to know, you shall hear. Your aunt, then, wore a full-dress court cap without the lappets, in which was a wreath of white flowers, and blue sheafs, two black and blue flat feathers (which cost her half a guinea a-piece, but that you need not tell of), three pearl pins, bought for Court, and a pair of pearl ear-rings, the cost of them — no matter what; less than diamonds, however. A sapphire blue *demi-saison* with a satin stripe, sack and petticoat trimmed with a broad black lace; crape flounce, &c.; leaves made of blue ribbon, and trimmed with white floss; wreaths of black velvet ribbon spotted with steel beads, which are much in fashion, and brought to such perfection as to resemble diamonds; white ribbon also in the Vandyke style, made up of the trimming, which looked very elegant; a full dress handkerchief, and a bouquet of roses. "Full gay, I think, for my *aunt*." That is true, Lucy, but nobody is old in Europe. I was seated next the Duchess of Bedford, who had a scarlet satin sack and coat, with a cushion full of diamonds, for hair she has none, and is *but seventy-six*, neither. Well, now for your cousin; a small, white Leghorn hat, bound with pink satin ribbon; a steel buckle and band which turned up at the side, and confined a large

pink bow ; large bow of the same kind of ribbon behind ; a wreath of full-blown roses round the crown, and another of buds and roses withinside the hat, which being placed at the back of the hair, brought the roses to the edge ; you see it clearly ; one red and black feather, with two white ones, completed the head-dress. A gown and coat of Chambéri gauze, with a red satin stripe over a pink waist, and coat flounced with crape, trimmed with broad point and pink ribbon ; wreaths of roses across the coat ; gauze sleeves and ruffles. But the poor girl was so sick with a cold, that she could not enjoy herself, and we retired about one o'clock without waiting supper, by which you have lost half a sheet of paper, I dare say ; but I cannot close without describing to you Lady North and her daughter. She is as large as Captain C——'s wife, and much such a made woman, with a much fuller face, of the color and complexion of Mrs. C——, who formerly lived with your uncle Palmer, and looks as if porter and beef stood no chance before her ; add to this, that it is covered with large red pimples, over which, to help the natural redness, a coat of rouge is spread ; and, to assist her shape, she was dressed in white satin, trimmed with scarlet ribbon. Miss North is not so large, nor quite so red, but has a very small eye with the most impudent face you can possibly form an idea of, joined to manners so masculine, that I was obliged frequently to recollect that line of Dr. Young's,

“ Believe her dress ; she 's not a grenadier,”

to persuade myself that I was not mistaken.

Thus, my dear girl, you have an account which perhaps may amuse you a little. You must excuse my not copying ; I fear, now, I shall not get nearly all my letters ready, — my pen very bad, as you see ; and I am engaged three days this week, — to a rout at the Baroness de Nolken's, the Swedish minister's, to a ball on Thursday evening, and to a dinner on Saturday. Do not fear that your aunt will become dissipated, or in love with European manners ; but, as opportunity offers, I wish to see this European world in all its *forms* that I can

with decency. I still moralize with Yorick, or with one more experienced, and say "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Adieu, and believe me yours,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

✓ London, 6 April, 1786.

MY DEAR SISTER,

ALTHOUGH I was at a stupid rout at the Swedish minister's last evening, I got home about twelve, and rose early this morning to get a few things ready to send out by Lyde. When a body has attended one of these parties, you know the whole of the entertainment. There were about two hundred persons present last evening. Three large rooms full of card-tables ; the moment the ceremony of courtesying is past, the lady of the house asks you, "Pray, what is your game ; whist, cribbage, or commerce ?" And then the next thing is to hunt round the room for a set to make a party ; and, as the company are coming and going from eight till two in the morning, you may suppose that she has enough to employ her from room to room. The lady and her daughter last night were almost fatigued to death, for they had been out the night before till morning, and were toiling at pleasure for seven hours, in which time they scarcely sat down. I went with a determination not to play, but could not get off ; so I was set down to a table with three perfect strangers, and the lady who was against me stated the game at half a guinea a-piece. I told her I thought it full high ; but I knew she designed to win, so I said no more, but expected to lose. It however happened otherwise. I won four games of her. I then paid for the cards, which is the custom here, and left her to attack others, which she did, at three other tables, where she amply made up her loss. In short, she was an old, experienced hand, and it was the luck of the cards rather



than skill, though I have usually been fortunate, as it is termed ; but I never play when I can possibly avoid it, for I have not conquered the disagreeable feeling of receiving money for play. But such a set of gamblers as the ladies here are ! and such a life as they lead ! Good Heavens ! were reasonable beings made for this ? I will come and shelter myself in America from this scene of dissipation, and upbraid me whenever I introduce the like amongst you. Yet here you cannot live with any character or consequence, unless you give in some measure into the ton.

Mr. Adams is gone to accompany Mr. Jefferson into the country to some of the most celebrated gardens. This is the first tour he has made since I first came abroad ; during which time we have lived longer unseparated than we have ever done since we were married.

Adieu. Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 21 May, 1786.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I WISH I had one of my nieces with me whilst I remain in this country ; but it will not be long before I shall quit it. Not ten days ago I expected to have taken my passage in the July packet, in consequence of some intelligence which afterwards wore a different appearance ; things are so fluctuating upon both sides the water, that it is really difficult to draw up conclusions. Prussia has treated, Portugal has treated, and the Emperor's minister has just received powers to treat also ; but, very unfortunately, the joint commission of the American ministers expired this month, so that nothing can be concluded until new powers arrive. Whoever has any thing to do with courts, must have patience for the first, second, and third requisites. I wish I was well out of the way of all

of them. My object is to return to America early next spring, if nothing arises to oblige us to take this step sooner. I cannot think of a fall passage. Of this, I shall be better informed in a few weeks. But there is no office more undesirable than that of Minister of the United States ; under the present embarrassments, there is no reputation to be acquired, and there is much to lose. Negotiations with other powers may be and have been effected ; but with England there is not the least probability of a treaty, until the States are united in their measures, and invest Congress with full powers for the regulation of commerce. A minister here can be of very little service until that event takes place. It is true, he may be invested with other powers, and one, more important than treating with this country, is, making peace with the Barbary States ; but as Mr. Adams foretold, so it has turned out. Lamb is returning without being able to effect any thing. The Dey would not even see him, and the demand for the poor fellows who are in captivity is a thousand dollars per man, and there are twenty-one of them. The sum allotted by Congress is so inadequate to the thing, that we must look only for war upon us. Unless Congress endeavour to borrow the sum demanded, and treat immediately, their demands will increase in proportion to the captures they make ; but of all this they are regularly and fully informed. You will not, however, make these matters known till you hear them from some other quarter. These are dull subjects for one lady to write to another upon ; but our country is so much interested in these affairs, that you must excuse me for troubling you with them, and you can communicate with discretion.

I thank you most sincerely for all your kindness to my dear sons, and hope they will ever bear a grateful remembrance of it ; the account you give of their behaviour and conduct is such as I hope they merit. The idea that their success in life depends upon their diligence and application to their studies, and a modest and virtuous deportment, cannot be too strongly impressed upon their minds. The foolish idea in which some of our youth are educated, of being

born gentlemen, is the most ridiculous in the world for a country like ours. It is the mind and manners which make the gentleman, and not the estate. There is no man with us so rich as to breed up a family in idleness, with ideas of paternal inheritance, and far distant may that day be from our land ; he who is not in some way or other useful to society, is a drone in the hive, and ought to be hunted down accordingly. I have very different ideas of the wealth of my countrymen from what I had when I left. Much of that wealth has proved fallacious, and their debts exceed their property. Economy and industry may retrieve their affairs. I know that the country is capable of great exertions ; but, in order to this, they must curtail their ideas of luxury and refinement, according to their ability. I do not believe any country exceeds them in the article of dress. In houses, in furniture, in gardens and pleasure grounds, and in equipage, the wealth of France and England is displayed to a high pitch of grandeur and magnificence ; but, when I reflect upon the thousands who are starving, and the millions who are loaded with taxes to support this pomp and show, I look to my happier country with an enthusiastic warmth, and pray for the continuance of that equality of rank and fortune which forms so large a portion of our happiness.

I yesterday dined at the Bishop of Saint Asaph's, in company with Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price and some strangers. The Bishop's character is well known and respected, as a friend to America, and justly does he deserve the character of a liberal man. He is polite, affable, and consequently agreeable. He has a lady and an unmarried daughter, both of whom are well-bred, according to my ideas ; according to British ideas, good breeding consists in an undaunted air and a fearless, not to say bold, address and appearance. The old lady is both sensible and learned, quite easy and social ; the young one is modest and attentive. This is a family, the friendship and acquaintance of which I should like to cultivate.

Dr. Priestley is a gentleman of a pale complexion, spare



habit, placid, thoughtful countenance, and very few words. I heard him preach for Dr. Price. His delivery is not equal to the matter of his discourses. I dined twice in company with the Doctor, and was mortified that I could not have more of his company at our own house, but he was engaged every moment of his time whilst in London. I believe I have frequently mentioned Dr. Price; he is a good and amiable man, a little inclined to lowness of spirits, which partly arises from the melancholy state of Mrs. Price, who two years ago had a paralytic stroke, and has been helpless ever since.

Believe me yours affectionately,  
A. A.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

London, 24 May, 1786.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THE affliction under which you are now laboring has been protracted to a much longer period than I feared when I first left America. It was then I buried the dear and amiable youth for whose loss your maternal bosom heaves the sad sigh, and over whose urn all who knew him must drop a tear of affectionate remembrance.

“Long at his couch Death took his patient stand,  
And menaced oft, and oft withheld the blow,  
To give reflection time, with lenient art,  
Each fond delusion from his soul to steal;  
Teach him from folly peaceably to part  
And wean him from a world he loved so well.”

Nor were the admonitions given in vain. The last visit which I made him I saw in his languid countenance the smile of complacent resignation to the will of Heaven.

“Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,  
Virtue alone has majesty in death.”

Be this your consolation, that, though young in years, he was mature in virtue; that he lived beloved, and died lamented; and who that live to riper years can ensure more to themselves?

Let not the popular torrent, which at present sets against your worthy partner, distress you. Time will convince the world who are their approved and unshaken friends, whatever mistaken judgments they at present form. I foresaw this when I so earnestly pressed the General to accept his last appointment, and attend Congress, if only for a few months. All that is well intended is not well received. The consciousness of doing our duty is, however, a support; but the designing jackdaw will sometimes borrow the plumes of the jay, and pass himself off to those who judge only by appearances.

You appear to think your friend at the height of prosperity, and swallowed up by the gaieties of Europe; but the estimate is far from the truth. I am much less addicted to them than most of my fair countrywomen whom I have left behind me. I do not feel myself at all captivated either with the manners or politics of Europe. I think our own country much the happiest spot upon the globe, much as it needs reforming and amending. I should think it still happier, if the inclination was more wanting than the ability to vie with the luxuries and extravagance of Europe.

Be so good, my dear Madam, as to present my best respects to your worthy partner, and affectionate remembrance to your sons, and be assured, I am at all times

Your friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO MISS E. CRANCH.

London, 18 July, 1786.

I THANK you, my dear niece, for your last kind letter. There are no days in the year so agreeable to me, nor any

amusements this country can boast, so gratifying to my heart and mind, as those days which bring me letters from my dear friends ; in them I always find the law of kindness written, and they solace my mind in the separation. Could I, you ask, return to my rustic cottage, and view it with the same pleasure and satisfaction I once enjoyed in it ? I answer, I think I could ; provided I have the same kind friends and dear relatives to enhance its value to me. It is not the superb and magnificent house, nor the rich and costly furniture, that can insure either pleasure or happiness to the possessor. A convenient abode, suitable to the station of the possessor, is no doubt desirable ; and to those who can afford them, parks, gardens, or what in this country is called an ornamented farm, appear to me an innocent and desirable object ; they are beautiful to the eye, pleasing to the fancy, and improving to the imagination ; but then as Pope observes,

“ ’Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,  
And splendor borrows all her rays from sense.”

I have lately visited several of the celebrated seats within twenty miles of this city. Sion Place, Tilney House and Park, Osterley and Pain’s Hill. The last place is about twelve miles distant from London. I must describe it to you in the words of the poet :

“ Here wealth enthroned in nature’s pride,  
With taste and beauty by her side,  
And holding plenty’s horn,  
Sends labour to pursue the toil,  
Art to improve the happy soil,  
And beauty to adorn.”

My dear niece will feel loth to believe that the owner of this beautiful spot, a particular account of which she will find in the book I send her, neither lives here, or scarcely looks upon it once a year. The former proprietor enjoyed it as the work of his own hands. Thirty-eight years ago he planted out all the trees, which are now one of its chief and principal ornaments ; but dying about three years ago,



left it to a tasteless heir. The book I send you is written by a Mr. Whately ; he has treated the subject of gardening scientifically. I should have overlooked many of the ornaments and beauties of the places I have seen, if I had not first perused this writer. Mr. Apthorp, I imagine, would be pleased in reading this book, and I wish you may derive as much entertainment from the perusal of it as it afforded me.

I dare say your imagination will present you with many places in Braintree, capable of making, with much less cost than is expended here, ornamented farms. The late Colonel Quincy's, uncle Quincy's, Germantown, all of these nature has been more liberal to than most of the places here, which have cost the labor of successive generations, and many of them half a million of money. Improvement in agriculture is the very science for our country, and many times ornament and beauty may be happily made subservient to utility, but then, to quote Pope again,

“Something there is more needful than expense,  
And something previous e'en to taste — 't is sense.”

When you have read Whately, read Pope's fourth essay, addressed to the Earl of Burlington, and I think you will see beauties in it unobserved before.

You might suspect me of partiality, if I was to say that nature shows herself in a style of greater magnificence and sublimity in America, than in any part of Europe which I have yet seen ; every thing is upon a grander scale ; our summer's heats and winter's colds, form a contrast of great beauty. Nature, arising from a temporary death, and bursting into life with a sudden vegetation, yields a delicious fragrance and verdure, which exhilarates the spirits and excites the imagination, much more than the gradual and slow advance of spring in the more temperate climates ; and where the whole summer has not heat sufficient to sweeten the fruit, as is the case in this climate ; even our storms and tempests, our thunder and lightning, are horribly grand ; here nothing appears to leave the bounds of mediocrity,

nothing is ferocious but man. But to return to your letter. You have found that you were too early in your conjectures respecting your cousin's marriage. She will write you herself, and inform you that she has commenced housekeeping very soon after her marriage. It would add greatly to her happiness, judging her by myself, if she could welcome her American friends often within her mansion. Persons in the early stages of life, may form friendships, but age grows more wary, more circumspect, and a commerce with the world does not increase one's estimation of its inhabitants. There is no durable basis for friendship, but virtue, disinterestedness, benevolence, and kindness.

This is the season of the year in which London is a desert. Even fashion languishes; I however enclose you a print of the bosom friends. When an object is to be ridiculed, 't is generally exaggerated; the print, however, does not greatly exceed some of the most fashionable dames. Pray, does the fashion of *merry thoughts*, *bustles*, and *protuberances* prevail with you? I really think the English more ridiculous than the French in this respect; they import their fashions from them, but in order to give them the *mode Anglaise*, they divest them both of taste and elegance. Our fair countrywomen would do well to establish fashions of their own; let modesty be the first ingredient, neatness the second, and economy the third, then they cannot fail of being lovely without the aid of Olympian dew or Parisian rouge.

We have sent your cousins some books, amongst which is Rousseau upon Botany; if you borrow it of them, it will entertain you; and the world of flowers, of which you are now so fond, will appear to you a world of pleasing knowledge. There is also Dr. Priestley upon Air, and Bishop Watson upon Chemistry, all of which are well worth the perusal of minds eager for knowledge and science, like my Eliza's and Lucy's. If they are not the amusements which females in general are fond of, it is because trifles are held up to them in a more important light, and no pains taken to initiate them in more rational amusements. Your papa,

who is blest with a most happy talent of communicating knowledge, will find a pleasure in assisting you to comprehend whatever you may wish explained ; a course of experiments would do more, but from these our sex are almost wholly excluded.

Remember me affectionately to your brother, and to all my neighbours. Enclosed is a book upon Church Music, which, be so good as to present to Mr. Wibird, with my compliments ; it was published here in consequence of an application of Dr. Chauncy's church for an organ, of Mr. Brand-Hollis. Adieu, my dear niece, and believe me,

Affectionately yours,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

London, 20 July, 1786.

MY DEAR NIECE,

My fourth letter I begin to you. I dare not reckon the number I have to write ; lest I should feel discouraged in the attempt, I must circumscribe myself to half a sheet of paper. Raree-shows are so much the taste of this country, that they make one even of the corpse of great people ; and the other day a gentleman presented me with a card to go and see the corpse of the Duke of Northumberland, who died at his house in the country, but was brought here to be laid in state. "It is," said he, "a senseless piece of pageantry ; but, as such, I would advise you to see it." It is practised only with crowned heads, and some of the most ancient families of Dukes. The late Duke was father to Lord Percy, whom the Americans well remember. His Lordship (who lives a few doors from us), being the elder son, inherits the title and estate, and is now Duke of Northumberland.

Northumberland House is in the city. A great, immense pile of building, to which one enters through massy iron gates.



At these gates stood four porters, clad in black ; the court, up to the house, was hung in black, and divided by a temporary railing, that the spectators might pass in upon one side, and out upon the other. From the court we entered a long suite of rooms, five in number, through rows of servants, one each side of us, all sabled as well as the rooms. I never before understood that line of Pope's,

“ When Hopkins dies, a thousand lights attend.”

I believe there were two thousand here, for daylight was totally excluded. Upon the walls were as many escutcheons as candles. These are formed so as to place a light in each. These plates are all washed with silver ; being put upon the black cloth and lighted in this manner, they gave the rooms a tomb-like appearance ; for in this manner are the tombs of the dead enlightened in Catholic countries, and it is not uncommon for the great to leave a large sum of money for lights to be kept constantly burning. Through these rooms we moved, with a slow pace and a solemn silence, into that which contained the corpse. Here, upon a superb bed of state, surrounded with twenty-four wax lights upon enormous silver candlesticks, lay the remains of his Grace, as I presume, but so buried amidst stars and garters, and the various insignia of the different offices he sustained, that he might as well have been at Sion House, for all that one could see of him ; for these ornaments are displayed like flags,

“ The George and garter dangling from the bed,  
Where gaudy yellow strove with flaming red.”

Upon the bolster lay the ducal coronet, and round the bed stood a dozen men in black, whom they call *mutes*. It was said that the corpse was clothed in a white satin tunic, and cap richly trimmed with blonde lace ; but for this I cannot vouch, though I do not think it more ridiculous than the other parts of the parade which I saw ; and this farce was kept up two days. The body was then deposited in Westminster Abbey, with as much parade and show as possible ; but being out of town, I did not see it.

We made an excursion as far as Portsmouth, which lies about seventy-five miles from London. I was much disappointed in the appearance of the country, great part of it being only barren heath. Within eighteen miles of the town, it appears fruitful and highly cultivated. We spent only one day at Portsmouth, but returned by another road, which brought us back through Windsor. Here we stopped a day and a half, and I was charmed and delighted with it. The most luxuriant fancy cannot exceed the beauties of this place. I do not wonder that Pope styled it the seat of the muses. Read his "Windsor Forest," and give full credit to his most poetic flights. The road by which we entered the town was from the top of a very steep hill ; from this hill, a lawn presents itself on each side. Before you, a broad, straight road, three miles in length ; upon each side a double plantation of lofty elms, lift their majestic heads, which is exceeded only by a view of the still grander forest, at a distance, which is thirty miles in circumference. From this hill you have a view of the Castle and the town. This place, as in former days, is the retreat of the monarch. The royal family reside here nine months of the year, not in the Castle, as that would require the attendance of ministers, &c. The present Queen has a neat lodge here, close to the Castle ; and there is another, a few rods distant, for the Princesses. His Majesty is a visiter to the Queen, and the family reside here with as little parade as that of a private gentleman. It is the etiquette, that none of his Majesty's ministers approach him upon business here. Despatches are sent by messengers, and answers returned in the same way. He holds his levees twice a week, in town. The Castle is one of the strongest places in Europe, as it is said, and a safe retreat for the family in case any more revolutions should shake this kingdom. It was first built by Edward the Third. Charles the Second kept his Court here during the summer months, and spared no expense to render it worthy the royal residence. He furnished it richly, and decorated it with paintings by the first masters. It is situated upon a high hill, which rises by a gentle ascent, and enjoys a most delightful prospect round



it. In front is a wide and extensive vale, adorned with fields and meadows, with groves on either side, and the calm, smooth water of the Thames running through them. Behind it are hills, covered with fine forests, as if designed by nature for hunting.

The terrace round the Castle is a noble walk, covered with fine gravel. It is raised on a steep declivity of a hill, and overlooks the whole town. Here the King and royal family walk on Sunday afternoons, in order to show themselves to those of their subjects who choose to repair to Windsor for that purpose. In fine weather the terrace is generally thronged. From the top of this tower on the Castle, they showed us thirteen different counties. To describe to you the apartments, the paintings and decorations within this Castle, would require a volume instead of a letter. I shall mention only two rooms ; and the first is that called the Queen's bed-chamber, where, upon the top of the ceiling, is painted the story of Diana and Endymion. The bed of state was put up by her Majesty ; the inside and counterpanes are of white satin, the curtains of pea green, richly embroidered by a Mrs. Wright, embroiderer to her Majesty. There is a full length picture of the Queen, with her fourteen children in miniature, in the same piece, taken by Mr. West. It is a very handsome likeness of her. The next room is called " the room of beauties " ; so named for the portraits of the most celebrated beauties in the reign of Charles the Second. They are fourteen in number. There is also Charles's Queen, a very handsome woman. The dress of many of them is in the style of the present day. Here is also Queen Caroline's china closet, filled with a great variety of curious china, elegantly disposed.

I have come now to the bottom of the last page. If I have amused my dear niece, it will give great pleasure to her affectionate aunt,

A. A.



TO MISSES E. AND L. CRANCH.

London, 23 July, 1786.

MY DEAR GIRLS,

I BOUGHT me a blue sarcenet coat not long since ; after making it up I found it was hardly wide enough to wear over a straw coat, but I thought it was no matter ; I could send it to one of my nieces. When I went to put it up, I thought, I wished I had another. " It is easily got, said I. Ned, bring the carriage to the door and drive me to Thornton's, the petticoat shop." " Here, Madam, is a very nice pink coat, made too of the widest sarcenet." " Well, put it up." So back I drove, and now, my dear girls, there is a coat for each of you. Settle between yourselves which shall have the blue and which the red, pay no regard to the direction, only when you put them on, remember your aunt wishes they were better for your sakes.

Mr. Appleton and a Dr. Spooner go with the Callaghan ; they both dine here to-day, and I shall request one of them to put them in his trunk, and some black lace which I have bought for Mrs. Welsh.

Remember me to my dear and aged mother. You will make her caps for her, I know, but if you will cut and send me a pattern, I will make some here and send her. She will be better pleased with them, I know. If there is any thing in particular which you want, tell me. I have not written above half the letters I want to, yet I have done little else for a whole week. By Captain Barnard I design writing to Miss B. Palmer and others, which I shall not have time to do now, because to-morrow morning I set out on my journey. If you and cousin Lucy will send me a shoe for a pattern I will get you a pair of new-fashioned morocco. I have not written a line yet, either to son Charles or Johnny. I have been to Hackney to hear Dr. Price to-day, upon the duties of children to parents ; it was an excellent discourse ;

but you, my dear girls, so perfectly practise what he preached, that there is no occasion of repeating it to you.

Adieu, and believe, your own parents excepted, nobody loves you better than your ever

Affectionate aunt,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 12 September, 1786.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I AM again safe arrived in this city, after an absence of five weeks. By the last vessels, I wrote some of my friends that I was going to visit Holland. That I had a desire to see that country you will not wonder at, as one of those theatres, upon which my partner and fellow-traveller had exhibited some of his most important actions, and rendered to his country lasting blessings. It has been the policy of some of our allies to keep, as much as possible, these events out of sight, and of some of our countrymen to lessen their value in the eyes of mankind. I have seen two Histories of the American war, written in French, and one lately published in English by a Mr. Andrews. In one of them, no notice is taken, or mention made, of our alliance with Holland, and the two others mention it as slightly as possible; and our own countrymen set them the example. France, to be sure, was the first to acknowledge our independence, and to aid us with men and money, and ought always to be first ranked amongst our friends; but Holland, surely, ought not to be totally neglected. From whence have we drawn our supplies for these five years past, even to pay to France the interest upon her loan, and where else could we now look in case of a pressing emergency? Yet have I observed, in sermons upon public occasions, in orations, &c., France is always mentioned with great esteem, Holland totally neglected. This is neither policy nor justice. I have been led to

a more particular reflection upon this subject, from my late visit to that country. The respect, attention, civility, and politeness, which we received from that people, wherever we went, was a striking proof, not only of their personal esteem, but of the ideas they entertain with respect to the revolution which gave birth to their connexion with us, and laid, as they say, the foundation for their restoration to privileges, which had been wrested from them, and which they were now exerting themselves to recover. The spirit of liberty appears to be all alive in them; but whether they will be able to accomplish their views, without a scene of blood and carnage, is very doubtful.

As to the country, I do not wonder that Swift gave it the name of "Nick Frog," though I do not carry the idea so far as some, who insist that the people resemble the frog in the shape of their faces and the form of their bodies. They appear to be a well-fed, well-clothed, contented, happy people. Very few objects of wretchedness present themselves to your view, even amidst the immense concourse of people in the city of Amsterdam. They have many public institutions which do honor to humanity, and to the particular directors of them. The money allotted to benevolent purposes is applied solely to the benefit of the charities, instead of being wasted and expended in public dinners to the guardians of them, which is said to be the case too much in this country. The civil government, or police, must be well regulated, since rapine, murder, and robbery are very seldom found amongst them.

The Exchange of Amsterdam is a great curiosity. As such, they carried me to see it. I was with Mr. Van Stap-horst; and, though the crowd of people was immense, I met with no difficulty in passing through, every person opening a passage for me. The Exchange is a large square, surrounded with a piazza. Here, from twelve till two o'clock, all and every person who has business of any kind to transact, meet, sure of finding the person they want; and it is not unusual to see ten thousand persons collected at once. I was in a chamber above the Exchange; the



buzz from below was like the swarming of bees. The most important places which I visited, were Rotterdam, Delft, the Hague, Leyden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Utrecht. I went through many other villages and towns; the names I do not recollect. I was eight days at the Hague, and visited every village round it, amongst which is Scheveling, a place famous for the embarkation of King Charles. From Utrecht I visited Zest, a small town belonging wholly to the Moravians, who maintain the same doctrines with the Moravians at Bethlehem, in Pennsylvania, but which are not the best calculated for fulfilling the great command of replenishing the earth. I visited Gouda, and saw the most celebrated paintings upon glass which are to be found. These were immense windows, reaching from the top to the bottom of a very high church, and containing Scripture history. Neither the faces nor attitudes had any thing striking; but the colors, which had stood for near two hundred years, were beautiful beyond imagination. From Amsterdam, we made a party one day to Saardam, a few hours' sail only. It was their annual fair, and I had an opportunity of seeing the people in their holiday suits. This place is famous for being the abode of the Czar Peter, whose ship-carpenter's shop they still show. At every place of note, I visited the cabinets of paintings and natural history, and all the public buildings of distinction, as well as the seats of several private gentlemen, and the Prince of Orange's house at the Hague, where he holds his court during the summer months; but the difference, which subsists between him and the States, occasioned his retreat to Loo. Consequently I had no opportunity of being presented to that Court. We were invited to dine one day at Sir James Harris's, the British Minister at that Court, who appears a very sensible, agreeable man. Lady Harris, who is about twenty-four years old, may be ranked with the first of English beauties. She was married at seventeen, and has four fine children; but, though very pretty, her Ladyship has no dignity in her manners, nor solidity in her deportment. She rather seems of the good-humored,

giggling class,—a mere trifler ; at least, I saw nothing to the contrary. I supped at the Marquis de Verac's, the French Ambassador's, with about fifty gentlemen and ladies. His own lady is dead. He has a daughter-in-law, who usually lives with him, but was now absent in France.

Upon the whole, I was much gratified with my excursion to a country, which cannot show its like again. The whole appearance of it is that of a meadow. What are called the dikes, are the roads, which, being raised, separate the canals. Upon these you ride, through rows of willow trees upon each side. Not a hill to be seen. It is all a continued plain, so that trees, meadows, and canals, canals, trees, and meadows, are the unvaried scene. The houses are all brick, and the streets are paved with brick. It is very unusual to see a single square of glass broken, or a brick out of place, even in the meanest house. They paint every piece of wood within and without their houses ; and, what I thought, not so wholesome, their milk-pails are painted, within and without, and so are their horse-carts ; but it is upon a principle of economy. The country is exceeding fruitful, and every house has a garden spot, plentifully stored with vegetables. The dress of all the country people is precisely the same that it was two hundred years ago, and has been handed down from generation to generation unimpaired. You recollect the short petticoats, and long short-gowns, round-eared caps with straight borders, and large straw hats, which the German women wore when they first settled at Germantown. Such is now the dress of all the lower class of people, who do not even attempt to imitate the gentry. I was pleased with the trig neatness of the women ; many of them wear black tammy aprons, thick quilted coats, or russet skirts, and small hoops ; but only figure to yourself a child of three or four, dressed in the same way. They cut a figure, I assure you. Gold ear-rings are universally worn by them, and bracelets upon holidays. The dress of the men is full as old-fashioned ; but the Court and genteel people dress part English and part French. They generally speak both the languages,



but French most. Since their intercourse with America, the English language is considered as an essential part of education. I would not omit to mention that I visited the church at Leyden, in which our forefathers worshipped, when they fled from hierarchical tyranny and persecution. I felt a respect and veneration upon entering the doors, like what the ancients paid to their Druids.

Upon my return home, I found that Captain Cushing had arrived in my absence, and a noble packet was handed to me by your niece soon after I arrived ; but, as we had not seen each other for five weeks, we had much to say ; and, in addition to that, I had not closed my eyes for two days and nights, having had a stormy, boisterous passage of three days, attended with no small danger ; and, as I had rode seventy-five miles that day, they all voted against my opening my letters that night. Mortifying as it was, I submitted, being almost light-headed with want of rest, and fatigue. But I rose early the next morning and read them all before breakfast ; and here let me thank my dear sister for the entertainment hers afforded me ; but, like most of the scenes of life, the pleasure was mixed with pain. The account of the death of our dear and worthy aunt reached me in a letter from cousin W. Smith, the week before I went my journey. Although I took a final leave of her when I quitted America, yet I have been willing to flatter myself with the hope that I might be mistaken, and that her life would be prolonged beyond my expectations. How often has her image appeared to my mind in the same form in which she addressed me when I left her house. You know how susceptible her heart was to every tender impression. She saw how much I was distressed, and strove herself for a magnanimity that gave to her whole appearance a placid solemnity which spoke more forcibly than words. There was a something indescribable, which to me seemed angelic, in her whole manner and appearance, that most powerfully impressed my mind ; and I could not refrain, when I arrived here, from mentioning it to Mr. Smith, who, I dare say, will recollect it. Like the angel she then



appeared, she now really is, fitted by a life of piety and benevolence to join her kindred spirits. She has left us her example, and the memory of her many virtues, to comfort our afflicted hearts. Beloved, regretted, and lamented! She was like a parent to me, and my full heart has paid the tributary tears to her memory.

Adieu. Believe me yours very affectionately,

A. A.

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TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

London, 27 September, 1786.

MY DEAR SON,

SINCE I wrote you last, I have made two excursions, one to Holland, and one of a week to the Hyde, the seat of Mr. Brand-Hollis. Here I was both entertained and delighted. In the first place, I must describe Mr. Hollis to you. He is a neat, nice bachelor about fifty years old; a learned, sensible antiquarian. The late Mr. Hollis, whose name he bears, could not have chosen a better representative to have bestowed his mantle upon, for with it has descended that same love of liberty, benevolence, and philanthropy, which distinguished his worthy benefactor. At the entrance of the hall you discover the prevailing taste. There are a number of ancient busts, amongst which is one of Marcus Aurelius, who is a great favorite of Mr. Hollis. He told us, that all the great painters who had drawn Jesus Christ, had taken the busts of Marcus Aurelius as a model. There is a fine white marble bust of the late Mr. Hollis in this collection. This hall is large and spacious, and has been added to the house by Mr. Brand-Hollis since the death of his father<sup>1</sup> who left it to him. The chamber where we lodged was hung round with portraits of his family. It is

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brand assumed the name of Hollis, in consequence of the bequest of his fortune made to him by Thomas Hollis.

at one end of the house, and from two windows in front, and one at the end, we had a beautiful view of lawns and glades, clumps of trees and stately groves, and a piece of water full of fish. The borders of the walks in the pleasure-grounds are full of rare shrubs and trees, to which America has contributed her full proportion. To give you some idea of the singularity in which this good man discovers his taste, near the walk from his door to the road, he has a large and beautiful fir, which he calls Dr. Jebb. Having paled this tree in with a neat ornament, he has consecrated it to the memory of that excellent man, with whom I had only the pleasure of a short acquaintance, before he was called to the regions of immortality. He possessed an excellent understanding, an unshaken integrity, and a universal benevolence, and was one of the few firm and steady friends to America. Cut off in middle age, he left a companion endowed with an understanding superior to most of her sex; always in delicate health, but now a prey to the most piercing grief, which will shortly close the scene with her. They had no children, and, being wholly a domestic woman, the pleasures of the world have no relish for her. Her friends have at length prevailed with her to go into the country for a few weeks.

But to return to Mr. Hollis's curiosities. In his garden he has a tall cypress, which he calls General Washington, and another by its side, which he has named for Colonel Smith, as his aid-de-camp. This gentleman possesses a taste for all the fine arts. In architecture, Palladio is his oracle. Amongst his paintings are several of the first masters. Over his chimney, in his cabinet, are four small portraits, which he told me were his hero, his general, his philosopher, and his writer. Marcus Aurelius was his general; his hero, pardon me, I have forgotten him. Plato was his writer, and Hutcheson his philosopher, who was also his preceptor. Mr. Hollis speaks also of him with great veneration and affection. In the dining-room is a luxuriant picture for a bachelor, a Venus and Adonis, by Rembrandt, and two views, of a modern date, of the estate in Dorsetshire, which

the late Mr. Hollis gave him. As there is only a farmhouse upon it, he never resides there. There are three pastures belonging to it, which are called Hollis, Mead, and Brand. In Hollis pasture are the remains of its late owner, who left it as an order, which was faithfully executed, to be buried there, and ten feet deep, the ground to be ploughed up over his grave, that not a monument nor stone should tell where he lay. This was whimsical and singular, be sure, but singularity was his characteristic, as many of his works show.

Between Mr. Hollis's drawing-room and his library, is a small cabinet, which he calls the Boudoir, which is full of curiosities ; amongst them a dagger made of the sword which killed Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, and an inscription, " Memento Godfrey, Protomartyr. pro Religione Protestantium." In every part of the house you see Mr. Hollis's owl, cap of liberty, and dagger. In this cabinet is a silver cup, with a cover in the shape of an owl, with two rubies for eyes. This piece of antiquity was dug up at Canterbury from ten feet depth, and is considered a monkish conceit. Amongst the curiosities in this room is a collection of duodecimo prints, to the number of forty-five, of all the orders of nuns, which Mr. Bridgen purchased some years ago in the Austrian Netherlands, and presented to Mr. Hollis. Mr. Bridgen has lately composed some verses which are placed by the side of them. The idea is, that, banished from Germany by the Emperor, they have taken an asylum at the Hyde in sight of the Druids, the Portico of Athens, and the venerable remains of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities. I would not omit the mention of a curious medallion, on which is wrought a feast of all the heathen gods and goddesses sitting round a table. Jupiter throws down upon the middle of it one of his thunderbolts, flaming at each end with lightning ; he lights his own pipe at it, and all the rest follow his example ; Venus, Minerva, and Diana are whiffing away. This is the first time I ever conceived tobacco an ingredient in the feast of the Celestials. It must have been the invention of some Dutchman.



As select and highly-honored friends, we were admitted into the library and to a view of the Miltonian Cabinet. In this, he has the original edition of Milton's works, and every other to the present day. His library, his pictures, busts, medals, coins, Greek, Roman, Carthaginian, and Egyptian, are really a selection, as well as a collection, of most rare and valuable curiosities. In the early part of his life, he visited Rome, Italy, and many other countries. His fortune is easy, and, as he has lived a bachelor, his time is occupied wholly by the sciences. He has a maiden sister of forty-five, I should judge, who lives with him when he is in the country. They each of them own a house in town, and live separate during the winter. Miss Brand is curious in china, and in birds. She has a piece of all the different manufactures of Porcelain made in this kingdom; either a cup or bowl, a mug or jar. She has also a variety of singing-birds. But what I esteem her much more for is, that she has taken from the streets half a dozen poor children, clothed them, and put them to school. This is doing good not only to the present, but future generations. 'Tis really curious to see how the taste of the master has pervaded all the family. John, the coachman, has a small garden spot, which he invited me to see. Here was a collection of curious flowers, and a little grotto filled with fossils and shells. The gardener, whose house stands within a few rods of the mansion-house, is bee mad. He has a great number of glass hives, in which you may see the bees at work; and he showed me the queen's cell. He handles the bees as one would flies; they never sting him. He insists that they know him, and will, with great fluency, read you a lecture of an hour, upon their laws and government. He has an invention for excluding the drones, who are larger bees than the rest, and when once out of the hive, they cannot return.

It would require a whole volume to enumerate to you all that was worthy attention, and had you been one of the visitors, I dare say you would have collected a larger stock of improvement, and been much more minute than I have been in my account of curiosities; but I could not remember

amidst such a variety. I enclose you a drawing of the house, which Mr. Hollis gave me.

My visit to Holland was agreeable, but to your aunt Cranch I must refer you for particulars. Madam Dumas and Miss were absent upon her estate until the evening before I came away. I called to pay them a visit, and had a very cordial reception. Mr. Dumas speaks of you with great affection, as well as Madame, and Miss looked kind. The Marquis de Verac inquired after you with great politeness; said you were interpreter for him and Mr. Dana when you were at Petersburg, and that, if I was dressed in your clothes, he should have taken me for you. "Years excepted," he should have added; but that was a mental reservation. He is ambassdor at the Hague.

Remember me affectionately to your brothers, and to all other friends; and believe me most tenderly

Your ever affectionate mother,

A. A.

October 14th. Enclosed, you will find a medal of his present Majesty. As you have no great affection for him, you may exchange it for any property you like better.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

London, 21 November, 1786.

MY DEAR SISTER,

MR. S — called upon us a day or two ago, and delivered me your kind letter of July the 20th. It was of a later date than any I had received from you, though near four months old. It was a little unfortunate for the gentleman, that Mr. Adams entered immediately into an inquiry of him respecting the state and commerce of the Massachusetts, of which, be sure the gentleman drew a most gloomy picture, and finished the whole by saying, that the people in the United States were as much oppressed by taxes as they were in

Europe. This being so wholly groundless, it roused the quick feelings of Mr. Adams, who replied a little warmly, "Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that people who hold this language, betray a total ignorance of the subject. Name the article in this country, even to the light of heaven, the air you breathe, and the water you drink, which is not taxed. Loaded down with accumulated burdens is this *free people*, yet the whole is not sufficient to pay even the interest of the national debt, and the charges of government. Mr. Pitt's surplus is a vision, and new methods of taxation must be devised. Pray, are our farmers perishing in the midst of plenty, as in Ireland? Are our fishermen starving? Cannot the laborer find a subsistence? Or has the price of labor fallen to sixpence, and subsistence risen to a shilling? Or is it only trade that languishes? Thank God, that necessity, then, will oblige those who have lived luxuriously at the expense of others, and upon property which was not their own, to do so no longer. There is not a merchant in England, France, or Holland, with a capital which could buy fifty of our most opulent merchants, that lives at half the expense which I have been informed many of ours have run into during the war, and since."

By this time I had got into that part of your letter, which informed me that Mr. S ——— had been unfortunate in business. I knew Mr. Adams was a perfect stranger to this, and could design nothing against the gentleman; but still I felt pained for him, as I presumed he had never had such a lesson before. He drew in his horns, and was more upon his guard the remainder of the time. We asked him to dine with us the next day, but he was engaged. Mr. Adams will return his visit, and then we shall send him a card of invitation. In his manners and address he appears much of a gentleman.

The accounts you gave me of the singing of your birds, and the prattle of your children, entertained me much. Do you know that European birds have not half the melody of ours? Nor is their fruit half so sweet, nor their flowers half so fragrant, nor their manners half so pure, nor their



people half so virtuous ; but keep this to yourself, or I shall be thought more than half deficient in understanding and taste. I will not dispute what every person must assent to ; that the fine arts, manufactures, and agriculture have arrived at a greater degree of maturity and perfection. But what is their age ? What their individual riches, when compared with us ? Far removed from my mind may the national prejudice be, of conceiving all that is good and excellent comprised within the narrow compass of the United States. The Universal Parent has dispensed his blessings throughout all creation, and, though to some he hath given a more goodly heritage than to others, we have reason to believe that a general order and harmony are maintained by apportioning to each his proper station. Though seas, mountains, and rivers are geographical boundaries, they contract not the benevolence and good will of the liberal mind, which can extend itself beyond the limits of country and kindred, and claim fellowship with Christian, Jew, or Turk. What a lesson did the great Author of our religion give to mankind by the parable of the Jew and the Samaritan ; but how little has it been regarded ! To the glory of the present age, they are shaking off that narrow, contracted spirit of priestcraft and usurpation, which has for so many ages tyrannized over the minds of mankind, and deluged the world in blood. They consider religion not as a state stalking-horse, to raise men to temporal power and dignity ; but as a wise and benevolent system, calculated to still the boisterous passions, to restrain the malevolent ones, to curb the ambitious, and to harmonize mankind to the temper of its great Author, who came to make peace and not to destroy. The late act of toleration, passed by Virginia, is esteemed here as an example to the world.

We are now really in the gloomy month of November, such as I have heard it described, but did not last year experience. Now we have it, all smoke, fog, and darkness ; and the general mourning for the Princess Amelia adds to the gloom of the scene. I was yesterday at the drawing-room, for the first time since her death ; and, though I can-

not say all faces gathered blackness, all bodies appeared so. As she had given her fortune to her German nephews, it would have been absurd to have shown any appearance of grief. Poor John Bull is vastly angry and mortified. Had it been given to the Prince of Wales, *his liberal hand* would soon have poured forth the golden shower; and, as his aunt acquired it all in this nation, here it ought to have remained, says John; but he cannot alter it, so he vents himself, as usual, in abuse and bellowing.

Adieu.

Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 20 January, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I WILL now give you some account of my late tour to Bath, that seat of fashionable resort, where, like the rest of the world, I spent a fortnight in amusement and dissipation, but returned, I assure you, with double pleasure to my own fireside, where only, thank Heaven, my substantial happiness subsists. Here I find that satisfaction, which neither satiates by enjoyment, nor palls upon reflection; for, though I like sometimes to mix in the gay world, and view the manners as they rise, I have much reason to be grateful to my parents, that my early education gave me not an habitual taste for what is termed fashionable life. The Eastern monarch, after having partaken of every gratification and sensual pleasure, which power, wealth, and dignity could bestow, pronounced it all vanity and vexation of spirit; and I have too great a respect for his wisdom to doubt his authority. I, however, passed through the routine, and attended three balls, two concerts, one play, and two private parties, besides dining and breakfasting abroad. We made up a party of Americans; Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Rucker, and Miss Ramsay, Mr. Shippen, Mr.

Harrison, Mr. Murray, Mr. Paradise, Mr. Bridgen, and a Count Zenobia, a Venetian nobleman. These, with our domestics, made a considerable train, and when we went to the rooms, we at least had a party to speak to. As I had but one acquaintance at Bath, and did not seek for letters of introduction, I had no reason to expect half the civility I experienced. I was, however, very politely treated by Mr. Fairfax and his lady, who had been in America, and who own an estate in Virginia, and by a sister of Mr. Hartley's, who, though herself a cripple, was every way attentive and polite to us. Mr. John Boylston, whom I dare say you recollect, was the acquaintance I mentioned. He visited us immediately upon our arrival, and during our stay made it his whole study to show us every civility in his power. We breakfasted with him, and he dined with us. He has very handsome apartments, though he lives at lodgings. We drank tea and spent an evening with him, in a style of great elegance; for he is one of the nicest bachelors in the world, and bears his age wonderfully, retaining the vivacity and sprightliness of youth. He has a peculiarity in his manners, which is natural to him; but is a man of great reading and knowledge. He is a firm friend and well-wisher to America, as he amply testified during the war by his kindness to the American prisoners.

And now you will naturally expect that I should give you some account of Bath, the antiquity of it, and the fame of its waters, having been so greatly celebrated. The story, which is related of its first discovery, is not the least curious part of it. A certain King Bladud, said to be a descendant from Hercules, was banished his father's court, on account of his having the leprosy. Thus disgraced, he wandered in disguise into this part of the country, and let himself to a swine-herd, to whom he communicated the disease, as well as to the hogs. In driving his hogs one day at some distance from his home, they wandered away to one of these streams, of which they were so fond that he could not get them out, until he enticed them with acorns. After their wallowing in them for several successive days, he



observed that their scales fell off, and that his herd were perfectly cured. Upon which he determined to try the experiment upon himself; and, after a few bathings, he was made whole. And Bladud's figure in stone, is placed in the bath known by the name of the King's Bath, with an inscription relating his discovery of these baths, eight hundred and sixty-three years before Christ.

Bath lies in a great valley, surrounded with hills. It is handsomely built, chiefly with free-stone, which is its own growth, and is dug from the sides of its hills. The streets are as narrow and inconvenient for carriages as those of Paris, so that chairs are chiefly used, particularly in the old town. Bath was formerly walled in, and was a very small place; but of late years it is much extended, and the new buildings are erected upon hills. Since it has become a place of such fashionable resort, it has been embellished with a Circus and a Crescent. The Parades are magnificent piles of buildings, the square is a noble one, and the Circus is said to be a beautiful piece of architecture; but what I think the beauty of Bath, is the Crescent. The front consists of a range of Ionic columns on a rustic basement; the ground falls gradually before it down to the river Avon, about half a mile's distance, and the rising country on the other side of the river holds up to it a most delightful prospect. The Crescent takes its name from the form in which the houses stand; all of which join. There is a parade and street before them, a hundred feet wide, and nothing in front to obstruct this beautiful prospect. In this situation are the new assembly-rooms, which are said to exceed any thing of the kind in the kingdom, both as to size and decoration; but, large as they are, they were completely crowded the evenings that I attended. There is a constant emulation subsisting between the new and old rooms, similar to the North and South Ends of Boston. It was said whilst I was there, that there were fourteen thousand persons more than the inhabitants of Bath. By this you may judge what a place of resort it is, not only for the infirm, but for the gay, the indolent, the curious, the

gambler, the fortune-hunter, and even for those who go, as the thoughtless girl from the country told Beau Nash, (as he was styled,) that she came, *out of wantonness*. It is one constant scene of dissipation and gambling, from Monday morning till Saturday night, and the ladies sit down to cards in the public rooms as they would at a private party; and not to spend a fortnight or a month at Bath at this season of the year, is as unfashionable as it would be to reside in London during the summer season. Yet Bath is a place I should never visit a second time for pleasure. To derive a proper improvement from company, it ought to be select, and to consist of persons respectable both for their morals and their understanding; but such is the prevailing taste, that provided you can be in a crowd, with here and there a glittering star, it is considered of little importance what the character of the person is who wears it. Few consider that the foundation stone, and the pillar on which they erect the fabric of their felicity, must be in their own hearts, otherwise the winds of dissipation will shake it, and the floods of pleasure overwhelm it in ruins. What is the chief end of man? is a subject well worth the investigation of every rational being. What, indeed, is life, or its enjoyments, without settled principle, laudable purposes, mental exertions, and internal comfort, that sunshine of the soul; and how are these to be acquired in the hurry and tumult of the world? My visit to Bath, and the scenes which I mixed in, instead of exciting a gayety of disposition, led me into a train of moral reflections, which I could not refrain from detailing to you in my account of it.

Upon my return, I had a new scene of folly to go through, which was, preparing for the birth-day. But as the fashionable Magazine will detail this matter, I shall omit any account of birth-day dresses and decorations, only that I most sincerely wish myself rid of it. It is a prodigious expense, from which I derive neither pleasure nor satisfaction.

The riots and dissensions in our State have been matter of very serious concern to me. No one will suppose that our situation here is rendered more eligible in consequence



of it ; but I hope it will lead the wise and sensible part of the community in our State, as well as in the whole Union, to reflect seriously upon their situation, and having wise laws, to execute them with vigor, justice, and punctuality. I have been gratified with perusing many late publications in our Boston papers ; particularly the speech of the Chief Justice, which does him great honor. Mr. Adams, you will see by the books which Captain Cushing has carried out, has been employed in strengthening and supporting our governments, and has spared no pains to collect examples for them, and show them, in one short, comprehensive statement, the dangerous consequences of unbalanced power. We have the means of being the first and the happiest people upon the globe.

Captain Scott, I hear, is just arrived ; but it may be a week, perhaps ten days, before he will get up himself, so that, whatever letters he may have, I shall not be able to get them before Captain Cushing sails. This is rather unfortunate, as there may be something I might wish to reply to. As to India handkerchiefs, I give two guineas a-piece here for them, so that they are lower with you, as well as all other India goods. I give more for an ounce of spice than I used to do for a quarter of a pound in America. Only think, too, of five shillings sterling for every pound of coffee we use ! O, pray, by the next opportunity, send me a peck of Tuscarora rice. Let it be sifted. I want it only to scour my hands with. "Tuscarora rice ? say you, " why, I suppose she means Indian meal." Very true, my dear sister ; but I will tell you a good story about this said rice. An ancestor of a family, who now hold their heads very high, is said to have made a fortune by it. The old grand-dame went out to America, when its productions were not much known here, and returned in rather indigent circumstances. After some time, knowing the taste in all ages for cosmetics, she made out a pompous advertisement of a costly secret which she possessed for purifying and beautifying the complexion, — nothing less than the "Tuscarora rice" at a guinea an ounce. The project took like the



“Olympian dew” at this day, and barrel after barrel was disposed of at the moderate price before mentioned, till one fatal day, a sailor, whose wife had procured one quarter of an ounce, was caught in the very act of using it. The sailor very roughly threw away the darling powder, upon which his wife exclaimed that he had ruined her, as she could procure no more, there being an unusual scarcity at that time. The fellow examined the paper, and swore it was nothing but Indian meal, and that he would bring her two barrels for a guinea, the next voyage he went. Upon this, the imposture was discovered, and the good woman obliged to decamp. Now, though I do not esteem it so highly as the sailor’s wife, I pronounce it the best antidote to sea-coal black, that can be found. One friend and another have supplied me ever since I have been here, but now I am quite destitute. It is an article in so small quantity, that it will not be an object for the custom-house, so that it may come safely.

Remember me most affectionately to all my friends. I cannot write to half of them; my nieces shall hear from me by Raimond; in the mean time be assured, my dear sister, of the warmest affection of

Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 25 February, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER,

CAPTAIN DAVIS called yesterday to let me know that he should sail in the course of the week. Captain Barnard will not be long after him, and I almost wish I was going to embark with him. I think I should not feel more anxious if I was in the midst of all the disturbances, than I do at this distance, where imagination is left at full liberty. When law and justice are laid prostrate, who or what is secure? I received your letters, which came by Captain Scott, just as I

was going to step into the carriage to go into the City upon some business. As I was alone, I took them with me to read ; and, when I came to that part of your letter wherein you say that you had hoped to have seen only peace in future, after surmounting the horrors of one war, the idea was too powerful for me, and the tears involuntarily flowed. I was obliged to quit the letter till I had finished my business ; the thoughts which naturally occurred to me were, — “ For what have we been contending against the tyranny of Britain, if we are to become the sacrifice of a lawless banditti ? Must our glory be thus shorn and our laurels thus blasted ? Is it a trifling matter to destroy a government ? Will my countrymen justify the maxim of tyrants, that mankind are not made for freedom ? I will, however, still hope that the majority of our fellow-citizens are too wise, virtuous, and enlightened, to permit these outrages to gain ground and triumph. Solon, the wise lawgiver of Athens, published a manifesto for rendering infamous all persons who, in civil seditions, should remain spectators of their country’s danger by a criminal neutrality. The spirit shown by the gentlemen volunteers, and the capture of Shattuck, does honor to our State. More energy in government would have prevented the evil from spreading so far as it has done.

“ Mercy but gives sedition time to rally.  
Every soft, pliant, talking, busy rogue,  
Gathering a flock of hot-brained fools together,  
Can preach up new rebellion,  
Spread false reports of the Senate, working up  
Their madness to a fury quick and desperate,  
Till they run headlong into civil discords,  
And do our business with their own destruction.”

This is a picture of the civil dissensions in Rome, and to our mortification we find, that human nature is the same in all ages. Neither the dread of tyrants, the fall of empires, the havoc and desolation of the human species, nor the more gloomy picture of civil discord, are sufficient to deter mankind from pursuing the same steps which have led others to ruin ; selfishness and spite, avarice and ambition,

pride and a levelling principle, are qualities very unfavorable to the existence of civil liberty. But, whatever is to be the fate of our country, we have determined to come home and share it with you. Congress have never given Mr. Adams a recall from Holland, and he is vested (with Mr. Jefferson) with powers to form treaties with several other countries. His commission to this Court will terminate this time twelve months, and he has written to Congress his fixed and full determination to resign his commission and return at that period, if not before. So that, my dear sister, I most joyfully accept your invitation, and will come home, God willing, ere another year expires. Disagreeable as the situation of my native State appears, I shall quit Europe with more pleasure than I came into it, uncontaminated, I hope, with its manners and vices. I have learned to know the world and its value ; I have seen high life ; I have witnessed the luxury and pomp of state, the power of riches and the influence of titles, and have beheld all ranks bow before them as the only shrine worthy of worship. Notwithstanding this, I feel that I can return to my little cottage, and be happier than here ; and, if we have not wealth, we have what is better, — integrity.

27 February, 1787.

I had written you thus far with an intention of sending by Davis, but received a card to-day from Captain Barnard, that he will sail at the same time, which is a fortnight sooner than I expected. I have concluded to send by him. I wrote you by Captain Cushing, on board of whom I got Mr. Elworthy to put a small present for you, but was much mortified a day or two after to find, by a Boston paper, that they were prohibited articles. I hope you will not meet with trouble on account of them. I cannot but approve the spirit which dictated the measure ; the causes which gave rise to it must be deplored, for it is evidently a work of necessity rather than choice. The luxury, which had made such rapid strides amongst our countrymen, was more criminal than that which is founded upon real wealth, for they



have rioted upon the property which belonged to others. It is a very just observation, that those who have raised an empire have always been grave and severe; they who have ruined it have been uniformly distinguished for their dissipation. We shall wait with impatience for the result of General Lincoln's expedition. Much depends upon his success. Government seem afraid to use the power they have, and recommend and entreat, where they ought to *command*; which makes me apprehend that the evil lies deeper than the heads or hands of Shays or Shattuck. From letters received here both from Boston and New York, it is to be feared that visionary schemes and ambitious projects are taking possession of men of property and science; but, before so important an edifice as an established government is altered or changed, its foundation should be examined by skilful artists, and the materials of which it is composed, duly investigated.

The "Defence of the American Constitutions" is a work which may, perhaps, contribute to this end, and I most sincerely wish it may do the good intended.

I lament with you the loss of a worthy man, for such indeed was the friend of my dear Eliza. Our own duration is but a span! then shall we meet those dear friends and relatives who have gone before us, and be engaged together in more elevated views, and purer pleasures and enjoyments, than mortality is capable of. Let this idea soothe the afflicted mind, and administer balm to the wounded heart. All things are under the government of a supreme, all-wise Director; to Him commit the hour, the day, the year.

Affectionately your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 28 April, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER,

WE have accounts, by way of New York, to the 8th of

March, which inform us that General Lincoln had met with more resistance from the insurgents than we had reason to expect from former accounts; that an engagement had taken place, in which several persons on both sides fell, but we do not learn who; that Shays had got off into Vermont, where it was probable he would meet with protection. I hope these accounts are not well founded. Let not the patriots of our country be discouraged or disheartened; although their affairs are much embarrassed, the country is fruitful in resources. Patience, perseverance, industry, and frugality will accomplish great things. Our countrymen create most of the misfortunes they feel, for want of a disinterested spirit, a confidence in each other, and a union of the whole. It is a great misfortune, when one State thwarts the measures of eleven or twelve, and thus injures the credit and reputation of the whole. The situation of our country greatly damps the pleasure I should feel in anticipating my return to it. You may well suppose that falsehoods in abundance are circulated here; an attempt to publish the truth or to contradict them, would have no other effect than raising a nest of hornets and wasps, and would employ the whole time of one person. An extract of a letter published, from Dr. Rush to Dr. Price, giving an account of the establishment of two or three new societies, drew upon the latter so much abuse and scurrility as would disgrace any people. The writer, like an envenomed toad, spit forth his poison. There are a set of refugees residing here, the enormity of whose offences forbids their ever returning again to America. Like Satan, they look to the heights, from whence they have fallen, with a malice and envy similar to that which the arch fiend felt, when he beheld the glory of the new world; and, like him, they wish to destroy the happiness of its inhabitants. Such are Galloway, and Smith, who is gone prime minister to Lord Dorchester. A few days before he left this country, he gave it as his solid opinion, that he should live to see America sue to Britain for protection, and to be received again by it; he might have added, it should not be his fault if they

did not. I hope a watchful eye will be kept over Lord Dorchester and all his movements. This government are as much disposed to sow seeds of dissension among us as ever, and build wholly upon our splitting to pieces.

Adieu. Yours,

A. A.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

London, 14 May, 1787.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE lately been reading Mrs. Montague's Essays upon the genius and writings of Shakspeare, and I am so well pleased with them that I take the liberty of presenting them to you. The lady is still living, a widow, and possessed of an ample fortune, without any children. She has a nephew who bears the same name, and has lately been returned a member to Parliament. I should have wished to form an acquaintance with her, if I had not learnt that she was a violent anti-American, though sister of a Mr. Robinson, who has written some things in favor of our country, and who has always been friendly to our cause.

I have resided in this country nearly two years, and, in that time, I have made some few acquaintances whom I esteem, and shall leave with regret; but the customs and manners of a metropolis are unfriendly to that social intercourse which I have ever been accustomed to. Amusement and diversion may always be purchased at the theatres and places of public resort, so that little pains are taken to cultivate that benevolence and interchange of kindness which sweetens life, in lieu of which mere visits of form are substituted to keep up the union. Not only the wrinkled brow of age is grasping at the card-table, and even tricking with mean avarice, but the virgin bloom of innocence and beauty is withered at the same vigils. I do not think I should draw a false picture of the nobility and gentry of this metropolis,



if I were to assert that money and pleasure are the sole objects of their ardent pursuit ; public virtue, and, indeed, all virtue, is exposed to sale, and as to principle, where is it to be found, either in the present administration or opposition ? Luxury, dissipation, and vice, have a natural tendency to extirpate every generous principle, and leave the heart susceptible of the most malignant vices. To the total absence of principle, must be ascribed the conduct of the heir-apparent to the British throne, which is the subject of much speculation at this moment. The world has supposed that a marriage had taken place between the prince and a lady known by the name of Fitzherbert, whom, for three years, he pursued ; driving her for more than half that time out of her country to avoid him. As she was in independent circumstances, of an ancient and respectable family, of a fair character and honorable connexions, every person presumed her married to him, though contrary to the established laws of the land, and this, not only by a Catholic priest, but a Protestant one too. Every step for more than a year has confirmed this idea ; as the lady has attended him not only to the watering places, but into all public and private parties, and, at the prince's request, has been countenanced by the first persons in the kingdom — and the public papers have announced the report, and given credit to it uncontradicted throughout all Europe. But now, at a time when he wishes to be relieved from the load of debt he has contracted, and finds that this affair is likely to become a subject of parliamentary discussion, he authorizes Charles Fox (a man as unprincipled as the prince) to declare the whole story a malicious falsehood, and in the most explicit terms, to deny even the shadow of a marriage. Yet not a person whom I have heard mention the subject since, believes a syllable of Mr. Fox's assertion. Thus does this young man set both law and decency at defiance. His friends are even so barefaced as to pretend that no connexion but of the platonic kind has ever subsisted between them — he, a mere Scipio, and she, a vestal. What a prospect for this country ! What a prostration of honor and

virtue ! The heir-apparent frequenting the haunts of intemperance and vice, his greatest intimates sycophants and knaves, appearing in company so disguised as to lose himself, and commit the greatest rudeness, which was the case not a month since ; yet, when sober, really possessing the outward appearance of a well-bred gentleman. By some, he is held up as a man of learning and abilities, but of this I cannot learn any specimens, not even a refinement in his vices, since he is branded with a taste for the lowest and most vulgar. But I will quit him, since I shall never owe him either honor or allegiance, and will turn my attention to my own country, which, though not terrified with the prospect of a profligate prince to govern it, appears to be in an untranquillized state, embarrassed in its finances, distressed in its commerce, and unbalanced in its governments. But I have faith that will remove mountains ; and, as distress and difficulties in private life are frequently spurs to diligence, so have we seen public industry excited in the same manner. During the late war, success crowned our efforts, and gave us independence. Our misfortune is, that we became indolent and intoxicated. Luxury, with ten thousand evils in her train, exiled the humble virtues. Industry and frugality were swallowed up in dissipation.

“ But it is not upon record,” says a late writer, “ that any State was ever yet so exhausted, but that whilst it enjoyed liberty it might draw new resources from its own vitals. Though the tree is lopped, yet so long as the root remains unhurt, it will throw out a greater luxuriance of branches, produce fruits of better flavor, and derive fresh vigor from the axe.”

Why, my dear madam, may we not console ourselves with ideas of this kind, instead of giving way to despondency ? I was very happy to learn that my young friend Harry distinguished himself with the ardor of a patriot and the zeal of a good citizen in accompanying General Lincoln in his late expedition. Had Pericles lived in the present day, he could not have made the boast which he does in his funeral oration over the Athenians, saying, that they



were the *only people* who thought those who did not lend their assistance in State affairs, not indolent, but good for nothing. It is indeed a pleasing presage of future good, when the most promising youth shrink not from danger, through a fondness for those delights which a peaceful, affluent life bestows, but

“Bare their bold breast, and pour their generous blood,”

esteeming it a dishonor that their country should stand in need of any thing which their valor can achieve.

I long, my dear madam, to return to my native land. My little cottage, encompassed with my friends, has more charms for me than the drawing-room of St. James, where studied civility and disguised coldness cover malignant hearts.

I will not close this letter without informing you that I am a grand — O no! that would be confessing myself old, which would be quite unfashionable and vulgar — but true it is. I have a fine grandson. I regret a little that it was not a daughter, for then I should have claimed the little one for the great one. Mrs. Smith desires me to present her respectful compliments to you, with thanks for your kind and friendly letter, which she will notice as soon as she is able. Be so good as to present my regards to the General and all your worthy family. I must acquit myself of a promise made to a young gentleman, who requested me, when I wrote to you, to lay him respectfully at your feet, by which I presume he meant that I should express the high esteem and profound veneration which he always professes towards you, and I know not how to do it better than by giving you his own words. I dare say you will be at no loss to recollect this gentleman by the name of Shippen, who is as genteel, well-bred a youth as any one from our country, and who is quite at home with us, as well as his companion, Mr. Cutting, who I think will make a figure in life, as he has both abilities and application.

I know not what to say for my companion, that he has



not written a single letter by this opportunity, but that he is so much engaged in travelling through the Italian republics, that I cannot draw off his attention except only to official letters. He says his friends must accept his printed letters. I will not apologize for the length of my letter, conscious as I am of all my sins of omission, but be assured, dear madam, that neither a want of affection or regard are in the number. For those my heart shall not reproach

Your assured friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

London, 16 July, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER,

If, as the poet says, "expectation makes the blessing sweet," your last letter was peculiarly so. As you conjectured, I was not a little anxious that neither Captain Barnard nor Davis brought me a line. I was apprehensive that something was the matter, some imminent danger threatening some friend, of which my friends chose not to inform me until their fate was decided. I sent on board the ship; the solitary box of meal was searched throughout. What, not one line from my dear sister Cranch, she who has never before failed me? Can it be possible? Uncle Smith did not, as usual, say in his letter, that all friends were well. Dr. Tufts, for the first time, omitted mentioning my children. That might be because he thought that they had written. Thus was my mind agitated until Captain Scott's arrival, who brought me your kind letter of May the 20th, but none from either of my nieces or children. Those dear lads do not write so often as I wish them to do, because they have nothing more to say than that they are well; not considering how important that intelligence is to an affectionate parent. Mr. J. Cranch wrote to me soon after Barnard's arrival, and sent me an extract of a letter from Miss B.

Palmer, with a particular account of the performances in April, at Cambridge, in which your son and mine bore a part. These young gentlemen are much indebted to her for her partiality and the very flattering manner in which she describes them. I hope they will continue to deserve the esteem of all good judges, and do honor to themselves and their country. The account you give me of the health of J. Q. A. is no more than I expected to hear. I warned him frequently before he left me, and have been writing him ever since. I hope he will take warning before it is too late. It gives me great satisfaction to learn that he has passed through the University with so much reputation, and that his fellow students are attached to him. I have never once regretted the resolution he took of quitting Europe, and placing himself upon the theatre of his own country; where, if his life is spared, I presume he will neither be an idle nor useless spectator. Heaven grant, that he may not have more distressing scenes before him, and a gloomier stage to tread, than those on which his father has acted for twelve years past. But the curtain rises before him, and instead of Peace waving her olive-branch, or Liberty, seated in a triumphal car, or Commerce, Agriculture, and Plenty, pouring forth their stores, Sedition hisses, Treason roars, Rebellion gnashes her teeth, Mercy suspends the justly merited blow, but Justice strikes the guilty victim. Here may the scene close, and brighter prospects open before us in future. I hope the political machine will move with more safety and security this year than the last, and that the new head may be endowed with wisdom sufficient to direct it. There are some good spokes in the wheels, though the master workmen have been unskilful in discarding some of the best, and choosing others not sufficiently seasoned; but the crooked and cross-grained will soon break to pieces; though this may do much mischief in the midst of a journey, and shatter the vehicle, yet another year may repair the damages. But to quit allegory, or you will think I have been reading Johnny Bunyan, the conduct of a certain gentleman is rather curious. I really think him an honest man,

but ambition is a very wild passion, and there are some characters, that never can be pleased unless they have the entire direction of all public affairs. And, when they are unemployed, they are continually blaming those in office, and accusing them of ignorance or incapacity, and spreading alarms that the country is ruined and undone ; but put them into office, and it is more than probable they will pursue the same conduct which they had before condemned. But no man is fit to be trusted, who is not diffident of himself. Such is the frailty of human nature, and so great a flatterer is self-love, that it presents false appearances, and deceives its votaries.

I have had with me for a fortnight a little daughter of Mr. Jefferson's who arrived here with a young negro girl, her servant, from Virginia. Mr. Jefferson wrote me some months ago that he expected them, and desired me to receive them. I did so, and was amply repaid for my trouble. A finer child of her age I never saw. So mature an understanding, so womanly a behaviour, and so much sensibility, united, are rarely to be met with. I grew so fond of her, and she was so attached to me, that, when Mr. Jefferson sent for her, they were obliged to force the little creature away. She is but eight years old. She would sit sometimes, and describe to me the parting with her aunt who brought her up, the obligations she was under to her, and the love she had for her little cousins, till the tears would stream down her cheeks ; and how I had been her friend, and she loved me. Her papa would break her heart by making her go again. She clung round me so that I could not help shedding a tear at parting with her. She was the favorite of every one in the house. I regret that such fine spirits must be spent in the wall of a convent. She is a beautiful girl, too.

This, I presume, is Commencement day. I dare say the young folks feel anxious. I don't know whether I should venture to be a hearer, if I was in America. I should have as many perturbations as the speakers. I hope they will acquit themselves with honor. Mr. Adams desires me to



tell cousin Cranch that any of his boooks are at his service. I believe we must send some of these young men to settle in Vermont. Can they get their bread in Massachusetts? But "the world is all before them"; may "Providence be their guide."

Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. CRANCH.

Grosvenor Square, 15 September, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER,

WHEN I wrote you last, I was just going to set out on a journey to the West of England. I promised you to visit Mr. Cranch's friends and relatives. This we did, as I shall relate to you. We were absent a month, and made a tour of about six hundred miles. The first place we made any stay at was Winchester. There was formerly an Earl of Winchester, by the name of Saer de Quincy. He was created Earl of Winchester by King John, in 1224, and signed Magna Charta, which I have seen; the original being now in the British Museum, with the handwriting to it.

It is said, that, in the year 1321, the title became extinct through failure of male heirs, but I rather think through the poverty of some branch, unable to contend for it. The family originally came from Normandy, in the time of William the Conqueror. They bear the same arms with those of our ancestors, except that ours substituted an animal for the crest in lieu of an earl's coronet. I have a perfect remembrance of a parchment in our grandmother's possession, which, when quite a child, I used to amuse myself with. This was a genealogical table, which gave the descent of the family from the time of William the Conqueror. This parchment Mr. Edmund Quincy borrowed, on some occasion, and I have often heard our grandmother say, with some anger, that she could never recover it. As the old gentleman is still living, I wish Mr. Cranch would question him about it, and know what hands it went into, and whether there

is any probability of its ever being recovered ; and be so good as to ask uncle Quincy how our grandfather came by it, and from whence our great-grandfather came, where he first settled, and take down in writing all you can learn from him and Mr. Edmund Quincy respecting the family. You will smile at my zeal, perhaps, on this occasion ; but can it be wondered at that I should wish to trace an ancestor amongst the signers of Magna Charta ? Amongst those who voted against receiving an explanatory charter in the Massachusetts, stands the name of our venerable grandfather, accompanied with only one other ; this the journals of the House will show, to his immortal honor. I do not expect either titles or estate from the recovery of the genealogical table, were there any probability of obtaining it. Yet, if I was in possession of it money should not purchase it from me.

But to return to Winchester. It is a very ancient place, and was formerly the residence of the Saxon and Norman kings. There still remains a very famous cathedral church, in the true Gothic architecture, being partly built in the year 1079. I attended divine service there, but was much more entertained with the venerable and majestic appearance of the ancient pile, than with the modern, flimsy discourse of the preacher. A meaner performance I do not recollect to have heard ; but, in a church which would hold several thousands, it might truly be said, two or three were met together and those appeared to be the lower order of the people.

From Winchester we proceeded to Southampton, which is a very pretty seaport town, and much frequented during the summer months as a bathing-place ; and here, for the first time in my life, I tried the experiment. It would be delightful in our warm weather, as well as very salubrious, if such conveniences were erected in Boston, Braintree, and Weymouth, which they might be, with little expense. The places are under cover. You have a woman for a guide, a small dressing-room to yourself, an oil-cloth cap, a flannel gown, and socks for the feet. We tarried only two days at Southampton, and went ten miles out of our way in order to visit Weymouth, merely for its name. This, like my native

town, is a hilly country, a small seaport, with very little business, and wholly supported by the resort of company during the summer months. For those persons who have not country-houses of their own, resort to the watering-places, as they are called, during the summer months, it being too vulgar and unfashionable to remain in London. But where the object of one is health, that of fifty is pleasure, however far they fall short of the object. This whole town is the property of a widow lady. Houses are built by the tenants, and taken at life-rents, which, upon the decease of the lessees, revert back again to the owner of the soil. Thus is the landed property of this country vested in lordships and in the hands of the rich altogether. The peasantry are but slaves to the lord, notwithstanding the mighty boasts they make of liberty. Sixpence and sevenpence per day is the usual wages given to laborers, who are to feed themselves out of the pittance. In travelling through a country, fertile as the garden of Eden, loaded with a golden harvest, plenty smiling on every side, one would imagine that the voice of Poverty was rarely heard, and that she was seldom seen, but in the abodes of indolence or vice. But it is far otherwise. The money earned by the sweat of the brow must go to feed the pampered lord and fatten the greedy bishop, whilst the miserable, shattered, thatched-roof cottage crumbles to the dust for want of repair. To hundreds and hundreds of these abodes have I been a witness in my late journey. The cheering rays of the sun are totally excluded unless they find admittance through the decayed roof, equally exposed to cold and the inclement season. A few rags for a bed and a joint stool comprise the chief of their furniture, whilst their own appearance is more wretched than one can well conceive. During the season of hay and harvest, men, women, and children are to be seen laboring in the fields ; but, as this is a very small part of the year, the little they then acquire is soon expended ; and how they keep soul and body together the remainder of the year is very hard to tell. It must be owing to this very unequal distribution of property, that the poor-rate is become such an intolerable burden. The inhab-



itants are very thinly scattered through the country, though large towns are well peopled. To reside in and near London, and to judge of the country from what one sees here, would be forming a very erroneous opinion. How little cause of complaint have the inhabitants of the United States, when they compare their situation, not with despotic monarchies, but with this land of freedom! The ease with which honest industry may acquire property in America, the equal distribution of justice to the poor as well as the rich, and the personal liberty they enjoy, all, all call upon them to support their government and laws, to respect their rulers, and gratefully acknowledge their superior blessings, lest Heaven in wrath should send them a —.

From Weymouth, our next excursion was to Axminster, the first town in the county of Devonshire. It is a small place, but has two manufactures of note; one of carpets, and one of tapes; both of which we visited. The manufactory of the carpets is wholly performed by women and children. You would have been surprised to see in how ordinary a building this rich manufactory was carried on. A few glass windows in some of our barns would be equal to it. They have but two prices for their carpets woven here; the one is eighteen shillings, and the other twenty-four, a square yard. They are woven of any dimensions you please, and without a seam. The colors are most beautiful, and the carpets very durable. Here we found Mr. J. Cranch. He dined with us, and we drank tea with him. This is a curious genius. He is a middle-sized man, of a delicate countenance, but quite awkward in his manners. He seldom looks one in the face, and seems as if he had been cramped and cowed in his youth. In company, one is pained for him; yet he is a man of reading, and an accurate taste in the fine arts. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, all of them have engaged his attention. His profession does not seem to be the object of his affections, and he has given up the practice, with an intention of pursuing some other employment. He appears to be a man whose soul wants a wider expansion than his situ-

ation and circumstances allow. Dejected spirits he is very liable to. I do not think him a happy man. His sentiments are by no means narrow or contracted; yet he is one by himself. He accompanied us in our journey to Exeter, Plymouth, and Kingsbridge. At Exeter, we tarried from Saturday till Monday afternoon. Mr. Bowring came to visit us. You know him by character. He appears a friendly, honest, worthy man, active in business, a warm and zealous friend to America, ready to serve his friends, and never happier than when they will give him an opportunity of doing it. His wife and daughter were on a visit to their friends at Kingsbridge, so that we did not see them. He requested, however, that we would drink tea with him after meeting; and, as our intention was to see Mr. Cranch's brother Andrew, he engaged to get him to his house. The old gentleman came with some difficulty, for he is very lame and infirm. He seemed glad to see us, and asked many questions respecting his brother and sister in America. I think he must have had a paralytic stroke, as his speech is thick. He has not been able to do any business for a number of years, and I believe is chiefly supported by his son, who is in the clothier's business with Mr. Bowring. Mrs. Cranch, though nearly as old as her husband, is a little smart, sprightly, active woman, and is wilted just enough to last to perpetuity. She told me that her husband took it very hard, that his brother had not written to him for a long time. I promised her that he should hear from him before long; and I know he will not let me be surety for him without fulfilling my engagement. Mr. Cranch's daughter married Mr. Bowring's brother; they have three sons. She is a sprightly woman, like her mother. And Mr. Bowring's daughter married a son of Mr. Nathaniel Cranch, so that the family is doubly linked together, and what is more, they all seem united by the strongest ties of family harmony and love. From Exeter, we went to Plymouth; there we tarried several days, and visited the fortifications and Plymouth dock, and crossed over the water to Mount Edgcombe, a seat belonging to Lord Edgcombe. The natural advan-



tages of this place are superior to any I have before seen, commanding a wide and extensive view of the ocean, the whole town of Plymouth, and the adjacent country, with the mountains of Cornwall. I have not much to say with respect to the improvements of art. There is a large park, well stocked with deer, and some shady walks; but there are no grottos, statuary, sculpture, or temples. At Plymouth, we were visited by a Mr. and Mrs. Sawry, with whom we drank tea one afternoon. Mr. Sawry is well known to many Americans, who were prisoners in Plymouth jail during the late war. The money which was raised for their relief passed through his hands, and he was very kind to them, assisting many in their escape. From Plymouth, we made an enterprise one day to Horsham, and, as we attempted it in a coach and four, we made a curious piece of work, taking by mistake a wrong road,—but this part of my story I must reserve for my dear Eliza.

Our next movement was to Kingsbridge; but, before I relate this, I ought to inform you that we made a stop at a place called Ivy Bridge, where we dined; and Mr. Adams accompanied Mr. Cranch to Brook, about three miles distant, to visit his uncle, Mr. William Cranch, who has been for several years quite lost to himself and friends. There is some little property in the hands of the family, who take charge of him, sufficient to support a person who has no more wants than he has. He appeared clean and comfortable, but took no notice, either of the conversation or persons. The only thing which in the least roused him was the mention of his wife. He appeared to be restless when that subject was touched. The character of this man, as given by all his friends and acquaintance, leads one to regret, in a particular manner, the loss of his intellect. Possessed of a genius superior to his station, a thirst for knowledge which his circumstances in life permitted him not to pursue, most amiable and engaging in his manners, formed to have adorned a superior rank in life, fondly attached to an amiable wife, whom he very soon lost, he fell a sacrifice to a too great sensibility; unable to support the shock, he grew melancholy, and was totally lost.



But to return to Kingsbridge, the chief resort of the Cranch family. We arrived at the inn about six o'clock on Saturday evening. About eight, we were saluted with a ringing of bells, a circumstance we little expected. Very soon we were visited by the various branches of the Cranch family, both male and female, amounting to fifteen persons; but, as they made a strange jumble in my head, I persuaded my fellow traveller to make me out a genealogical table, which I send you. Mr. and Mrs. Burnell, and Mr. and Mrs. Trathan, both offered us beds and accommodations at their houses; but we were too numerous to accept their kind invitations, though we engaged ourselves to dine with Mr. Burnell, and to drink tea with Mr. Trathan, the next day. Mrs. Burnell has a strong resemblance to Mrs. Palmer. She is a genteel woman, and easy and polite. We dined at a very pretty dinner, and after meeting drank tea at the other house, Mr. Trathan's. Their houses are very small, but every thing neat and comfortable. Mr. Burnell is a shoemaker, worth five thousand pounds; and Mr. Trathan a grocer, in good circumstances. The rest of the families joined us at the two houses. They are all serious, industrious, good people, amongst whom the greatest family harmony appears to subsist. The people of this county appear more like our New England people than any I have met with in this country before; but the distinction between tradesmen and gentry, as they are termed, is widely different from that distinction in our country. With us, in point of education and manners, the learned professions, and many merchants, farmers and tradesmen, are upon an equality with the gentry of this country. It would be degrading to compare them with many of the nobility here. As to the ladies of this country, their manners appear to be totally depraved. It is in the middle ranks of society, that virtue and morality are yet to be found. Nothing does more injury to the female character than frequenting public places; and the rage which prevails now for the watering-places, and the increased number of them, are become a national evil, as they promote and encourage dissipation,

mix all characters promiscuously, and are the resort of the most unprincipled female characters, who are not ashamed to show their faces wherever men dare to go. Modesty and diffidence are called ill-breeding and ignorance of the world; an impudent stare is substituted in lieu of that modest deportment, and that retiring grace, which awes whilst it enchants. I have never seen a female model here of such unaffected, modest, and sweetly amiable manners as Mrs. Guild, Mrs. Russell, and many other American females exhibit.

Having filled eight pages, I think it is near time to hasten to a close. Cushing and Folger are both arrived; by each I have received letters from you. A new sheet of paper must contain a reply to them. This little space shall assure you of what is not confined to time or place,—the ardent affection of your sister,

A. A.

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TO MISS LUCY CRANCH.

London, 3 October, 1787.

I THANK you, my dear Lucy, for writing by Mr. Jenks.

You learnt by Captain Barnard, that I was going a journey. I have given your mamma and sister some account of my late excursion to Devonshire. We returned home through Bristol, and took Oxford in our way, from whence we went to Woodstock, and visited Blenheim, the seat of the Duke of Marlborough, which was built at the public expense, and granted by the Crown to the Duke, for the services he had rendered his country. This castle is upon the grandest scale of any thing I have ever yet seen. We enter the park through a spacious and elegant portal, of the Corinthian order, from whence a noble prospect is opened to the palace, the bridge, the lake, with its valley, and other beautiful scenes. The front of this noble edifice, which is of stone, is three hundred and forty-eight feet from wing to

wing. On the pediment of the south front, towards the garden, is a noble bust of Louis the Fourteenth, taken by the Duke from the gates of Tournai. This, the gardener told us, he never failed pointing out to the French gentlemen who visited the place, and that they shrugged their shoulders and *mon-Dieu'd*. But, before I describe to you the gardens, I will attempt to give you a short, though imperfect account of the palace. It would require a week to view it, and a volume to describe it particularly. I will, therefore, only collect from my little journal the most remarkable objects.

We entered the palace through a magnificent hall, supported by Corinthian pillars. Over the door, going into the saloon, is a bust of John, Duke of Marlborough, and two statues in bronze, namely, the Venus de' Medici and a Faun. The ceiling is painted allegorically, representing Victory crowning John, Duke of Marlborough, and pointing to a plan of the battle of Blenheim. From the saloon, we pass through a suite of rooms, all of them containing a most costly and beautiful collection of paintings, many of them originals of the first masters. In the dining-room is a family-piece, the present Duke and Duchess, and six of their children, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The furniture of the rooms is of different-colored damask. The family being at the house, we saw only the lower apartments. The winter drawing-room is of tapestry, upon which is represented the Cardinal Virtues; chairs and curtains, white damask. From a series of smaller, though magnificent apartments, we were suddenly struck at entering the library, which is one hundred and eighty-three feet long, and the most costly, as well as beautiful place I ever saw. The Doric pilasters are of marble, with complete columns of the same, which support a rich entablature; the window frames, the surrounding basement of black marble, and the stuccoed compartments of the vaulted ceiling, are in the highest taste both of design and finishing. There is a person, who always attends at these seats, who has by heart the whole history of all that is to be seen; and he makes a very handsome sum of money



by it. This library was originally intended as a gallery for paintings; but the late Duke of Marlborough chose to have it furnished with the noble collection of Books made by Lord Sunderland, his Grace's father, which amounts to twenty-four thousand volumes, and is said to be the best private collection in England. They are kept under gilt wire lattices, and make a superb appearance. At one end of the room, is a highly finished marble statue of Queen Anne, with this inscription; "To the memory of Queen Anne, under whose auspices John, Duke of Marlborough, conquered, and to whose munificence, he and his posterity with gratitude owe the possession of Blenheim, in A. D. 1746." There are two marble busts over the chimney, one of Charles, Earl of Sunderland, who collected the books, and another of Charles Spencer, Duke of Marlborough; and, at the farther end of the room, is a fine Greek bust of Alexander the Great, and fourteen full-length family portraits. From two bow windows in this noble gallery, the eye is delighted with a view of the declivity, descending to the water, and the gradual ascent of the venerable grove, which covers the opposite hill. In short, whether we look within or without, all is on the scale of the sublime and the beautiful. I must not overlook the chapel, which makes one of the wings of the house, and in which there is a proud monument, of white marble, to the memory of the renowned Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The group of marble figures, large as life, upon this monument, are the Duke and Duchess, with two of their sons, who died young. They are supported by two figures, Fame and History. The altar-piece is the best painting I ever saw; our Saviour taken down from the cross.

From the house, we visited the gardens; and here I am lost, not in confusion, but amidst scenes of grandeur, magnificence, and beauty. They are spacious, and include a great variety of ground. The plain, or as artists term it, the lawn, before the palace, is kept in the most perfect order; not a single spire of grass rises above another. It is mowed and swept every other day, and is as smooth as the

surface of a looking-glass. The gardener, who has lived twenty-five years upon the place, told us that he employed about sixty-three hands during the summer, in mowing, sweeping, pruning, lopping, and in ornamenting the grounds. From this lawn is a gradual descent to the water, and you pass through spacious gravel walks, not in straight lines, as Pope expresses it,

“where each alley has a brother,  
And half the platform just reflects the other;”

but pleasing intricacies intervene. Through the winding paths, and every step, open new objects of beauty, which diversified nature affords of hill, valley, water, and woods; the gardens finally are lost in the park, amidst a profusion of venerable oaks, some of which are said to have stood nine hundred years. The gardens are four miles round, which I walked; the park is eleven. There is a magnificent bridge consisting of three arches; the water which it covers, is formed into a spacious lake, which flows the whole extent of a capacious valley. This was built at the expense of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, as well as a column which I shall mention in turn. The gardener, who was very loquacious and swelled with importance, told us, that since his residence there, the present Duke had greatly enlarged and improved the grounds; that he had beautified them by the addition of some well-placed ornaments, particularly the temple of Diana, and a noble cascade, round which are four river gods, represented as the guardian genii of the water.

This celebrated park was first enclosed in the reign of Henry the First. His successor, Henry the Second, resided at this seat, and erected in this park a palace, and encompassed it with a labyrinth, which was fair Rosamond's bower, celebrated by Addison. There are now no remains of it, except a spring at the foot of the hill, which still bears the name of Rosamond's Well. This palace is celebrated as the birth-place of Edmund, second son of Edward the First, and of Edward the Black Prince. Elizabeth was kept a prisoner there under the persecutions of Queen Mary; and

it continued to be the residence of kings until the reign of Charles the First, but it was demolished in succeeding times of confusion. There are now two sycamores planted as a memorial upon the spot where the old palace stood. The column will close my narrative. This is in front of the palace of Blenheim at about half a mile distance, and is one hundred and thirty feet high; on the top of which is John, Duke of Marlborough, and on which is the following inscription, supposed to be written by the late Lord Bolingbroke.

“The Castle of Blenheim was founded by Queen Anne,  
 In the fourth year of her reign,  
 In the year of the Christian era, 1705.  
 A monument designed to perpetuate the memory of the  
 Signal Victory  
 Obtained over the French and Bavarians  
 On the banks of the Danube  
 By John, Duke of Marlborough;  
 The Hero not only of this nation, but of this age;  
 Whose glory was equal in the council and in the field.  
 Who, by wisdom, justice, candor, and address,  
 Reconciled various, and even opposite interests;  
 Acquired an influence  
 Which no rank, no authority can give,  
 Nor any force but that of superior virtue;  
 Became the fixed, important centre  
 Which united in one common cause  
 The principal States of Europe.  
 Who, by military knowledge and irresistible valor,  
 In a long series of uninterrupted triumphs,  
 Broke the power of France  
 When raised the highest, and when exerted the most;  
 Rescued the empire from desolation,  
 Asserted and confirmed the liberties of Europe.”

Thus is the gratitude of the nation expressed, and thus do the heirs of Marlborough triumph. The present Duke is a man of literary pursuits, domestic, and a great astronomer. He has a fine observatory and apparatus. From this observatory he makes signals to Herschel at Windsor, and they study the stars together. I have made a very long letter of it. I hope it may prove an amusement to you.

Remember me kindly to all inquiring friends, and believe me, my dear niece,

Your ever affectionate

A. A.



TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

London, 12 October, 1787.

MY DEAR SON,

I CANNOT begin my letter by thanking you for yours. You write so seldom that you do not give me the opportunity. Yet I think you would feel disappointed if you did not get a few lines from me. I congratulate you upon your success at Commencement, and, as you have acquired a reputation upon entering the stage of the world, you will be no less solicitous to preserve and increase it through the whole drama.

It is said of Hannibal, that he wanted nothing to the completion of his martial virtues, but that, when he had gained a victory, he should know how to use it. It is natural to the human heart, to swell with presumption, when conscious of superior power; yet all human excellence is comparative, and he, who thinks he knows much to-day, will find much more still unattained, provided he is still eager in pursuit of knowledge.

Your friends are not anxious that you will be in any danger through want of sufficient application, but that a too ardent pursuit of your studies will impair your health, and injure those bodily powers and faculties upon which the vigor of the mind depends. Moderation in all things is conducive to human happiness, though this is a maxim little heeded by youth whether their pursuits are of a sensual or a more refined and elevated kind.

It is an old adage, that a man at thirty must be either a fool or a physician. Though you have not arrived at that age, you would do well to trust to the advice and experience of those who have. Our bodies are framed of such materials as to require constant exercise to keep them in repair, to brace the nerves, and give vigor to the animal functions. Thus do I give you "line upon line, and precept upon precept."

By the time this reaches you, you will have heard of the

humiliating condition of Holland. History does not furnish a more striking instance of abject submission and depression, totally and almost unresistingly conquered by a few Prussian troops ; a nation, that formerly withstood the whole power and force of Spain, and gave such proofs of bravery and prowess as astonished surrounding nations, now humbled to the dust by an imperious and haughty woman, backed by the troops of Prussia, for a mere trifling affront ; or rather, this has been the specious pretence for all the horrors which are brought upon the patriots and friends of liberty in Holland. May her name descend with eternal obloquy to future ages.

Poor Dumas and family have lived in a state worse than death ; since to exist in constant dread of being dragged a victim to an enraged mob, who were constantly threatening him and his family with destruction, is worse than death. His friends all forsook him, or dared not appear in his behalf. He wrote a most afflicting account to your father, and begged him to claim protection for him, as acting for the United States ; but, as he never had any public character, or, rather, never was commissioned by Congress, it could not be done. Mr. Dumas, you know has been engaged in the service of France, and has received a salary from that government, besides his being opposed to the measures of the Stadtholder ; all of which renders him particularly obnoxious to the Princess and her party.

This nation piqued at the treaty of alliance which was last winter made between France and Holland, has been ever since seeking revenge, by fomenting the troubles in Holland, and seized the first opportunity she had in her power, to bully France. The death of Vergennes, the deranged state of the finances in France, and the dispute between the King and his Parliament, all, all have contributed to hasten the downfall of liberty in Holland. England has held a very high tone, and given it out, that, if France marched a single man to the assistance of Holland, it should be considered as a commencement of hostilities ; and, from the conduct of France, she appears to have been intimidated and held in awe by it. This is another lesson to us not "to put our

trust in princes." England, not content with the tame and pacific conduct of France, is arming with a zeal and eagerness really astonishing to every person of reflection, who can see no object which she can have in view adequate to a compensation for the horror and distress she must bring upon her subjects by the increase of expenses, and the accumulation of the national debt.

If I was not present to see and hear it, I could scarcely credit that a whole people should not only tamely submit to the evils of war, but appear frantic with joy at the prospect ; led away by false glory, by their passions and their vices, they do not reflect upon past calamities nor approaching destruction ; and few of them have better reasons to offer for their conduct, than the lady with whom I was in company the other day, who hoped there would be a war. " Pray," said I, " how can you wish so much misery to mankind ?" " O," said she, " if there is a war, my brother and several of my friends will be promoted." In the general flame, which threatens Europe, I hope and pray our own country may have wisdom sufficient to keep herself out of the fire. I am sure she has been a sufficiently burnt child. Remember me to your brothers, if I do not write to them.

Your ever affectionate mother,

A. A.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

Richmond Hill, (N. Y.) 27 September, 1789.

I WRITE to you, my dear sister, not from the disputed banks of the Potomac, the Susquehanna, or the Delaware, but from the peaceful borders of the Hudson ; a situation where the hand of nature has so lavishly displayed her beauties, that she has left scarcely any thing for her handmaid, art, to perform.

The house in which we reside is situated upon a hill, the



avenue to which is interspersed with forest trees, under which a shrubbery rather too luxuriant and wild has taken shelter, owing to its having been deprived by death, some years since, of its original proprietor, who kept it in perfect order. In front of the house, the noble Hudson rolls his majestic waves, bearing upon his bosom innumerable small vessels, which are constantly forwarding the rich products of the neighbouring soil to the busy hand of a more extensive commerce. Beyond the Hudson rises to our view the fertile country of the Jerseys, covered with a golden harvest, and pouring forth plenty like the cornucopiæ of Ceres. On the right hand, an extensive plain presents us with a view of fields covered with verdure, and pastures full of cattle. On the left, the city opens upon us, intercepted only by clumps of trees, and some rising ground, which serves to heighten the beauty of the scene, by appearing to conceal a part. In the back ground, is a large flower-garden, enclosed with a hedge and some very handsome trees. On one side of it, a grove of pines and oaks fit for contemplation.

“ In this path  
How long soe’er the wanderer roves, each step  
Shall wake fresh beauties ; each last point present  
A different picture, new, and yet the same.”

If my days of fancy and romance were not past, I could find here an ample field for indulgence ; yet, amidst these delightful scenes of nature, my heart pants for the society of my dear relatives and friends who are too far removed from me. I wish most sincerely to return and pass the recess of Congress at my habitation in Braintree ; but the season of the year, to which Congress has adjourned, renders the attempt impracticable. Although I am not the only person who questions their making a Congress again until April, yet the punctuality of Mr. Adams to all public business would oblige him strictly to adhere to the day of adjournment, however inconvenient it might prove to him. He has never been absent from his daily duty in Senate a

single hour from their first meeting ; and the last month's business has pressed so hard, that his health appears to require a recess.

Shall I ask my sister why she has not written me a line since I came to this place ? With regard to myself, I own I have been cautious of writing. I know that I stand in a delicate situation. I am fearful of touching upon political subjects ; yet, perhaps, there is no person who feels more interested in them. And, upon this occasion, I may congratulate my country upon the late judicial appointments, in which an assemblage of the greatest talents and abilities are united which any country can boast of ; gentlemen in whom the public have great confidence, and who will prove durable pillars in support of our government.

Mr. Jefferson is nominated for Secretary of State in the room of Mr. Jay, who is made Chief Justice. Thus have we the fairest prospect of sitting down under our own vine in peace, provided the restless spirit of certain characters, who foam and fret, is permitted only its hour upon the stage, and then shall no more be heard of, nor permitted to sow the seeds of discord among the real defenders of the faith.

Your affectionate sister,

A. A.

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TO THOMAS BRAND-HOLLIS.<sup>1</sup>

New York, 6 September, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

You ask in one of your letters to Mr. Adams, " What is become of Mrs. Adams, that I do not hear from her ? "

If my heart had not done you more justice than my pen, I would disown it. I have so long omitted writing to you,

<sup>1</sup> This letter has been printed in the Notes to the Memoirs of Thomas Brand-Hollis, by Dr. Disney, from which it is taken.

that my conscience has been a very severe accuser of me. But, be assured, my dear Sir, that I never fail to talk of you with pleasure, and think of you with affection. I place the hours spent at the Hyde amongst some of the most pleasurable of my days, and I esteem your friendship as one of the most valuable acquisitions that I made in your country ; a country that I should most sincerely rejoice to visit again, if I could do it without crossing the ocean. I have sometimes been suspected of partiality, for the preference which I have given to England ; and, were I to live out of America, that country would have been my choice.

I have a situation here, which, for natural beauty, may vie with the most delicious spot I ever saw. It is a mile and a half distant from the city of New York. The house is situated upon an eminence ; at an agreeable distance flows the noble Hudson, bearing upon its bosom the fruitful productions of the adjacent country. On my right hand, are fields beautifully variegated with grass and grain, to a great extent, like the valley of Honiton in Devonshire. Upon my left, the city opens to view, intercepted, here and there, by a rising ground, and an ancient oak. In front, beyond the Hudson, the Jersey shores present the exuberance of a rich, well-cultivated soil. The venerable oaks and broken ground, covered with wild shrubs, which surround me, give a natural beauty to the spot, which is truly enchanting. A lovely variety of birds serenade me morning and evening, rejoicing in their liberty and security ; for I have, as much as possible, prohibited the grounds from invasion, and sometimes almost wished for game laws, when my orders have not been sufficiently regarded. The partridge, the woodcock, and the pigeon are too great temptations to the sportsmen to withstand. How greatly would it add to my happiness to welcome here my much esteemed friend. 'Tis true, we have a large portion of the blue and gold, of which you used to remind me, when you thought me an Egyptian ; but, however I might hanker after the good things of America, I have been sufficiently taught to value and esteem other countries besides my own.



You were pleased to inform us, that your adopted family<sup>1</sup> flourished in your soil; mine has received an addition. Mrs. Smith, Mr. Adams's daughter, and the wife of Colonel W. Stephens Smith, respecting the name of the great literary benefactor of her native state, and in grateful remembrance of the friendly attention and patriotic character of its present possessor, has named his new-born son Thomas Hollis. She desires me to present to you her affectionate remembrance. Mr. Adams is absent upon a journey, or he would have written you a letter of a later date than that which Mr. Knox is the bearer of. This gentleman is a brother of our Secretary of War, and is appointed consul to Dublin. He is intelligent, and can answer you any question respecting our government and politics, which you may wish to ask; but, if he should not see you, I know it will give you pleasure to learn that our union is complete, by the accession of Rhode Island; that our government acquires strength, confidence, and stability daily; that peace is in our borders, and plenty in our dwellings; and we earnestly pray, that the kindling flames of war, which appear to be bursting out in Europe, may by no means be extended to this rising nation. We enjoy freedom in as great a latitude as is consistent with our security and happiness. God grant that we may rightly estimate our blessings.

Pray remember me, in the most affectionate terms, to Dr. Price and to Mrs. Jebb; and be assured, my dear sir, that I am with every sentiment of regard and esteem,

Yours, &c.

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

<sup>1</sup> His trees. The allusion is explained in a preceding letter, p. 306 of this volume.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Philadelphia, 21 November, 1790.

MY DEAR,

I SUPPOSE you wish to hear from me and from your little boy. He is very well, and very amusing, as usual; talks of William, and of the other papa; is as fond as ever of the "fosses," and has a great addition to his amusement and pleasures from a flock of sheep, which are daily pastured by a shepherd and his dog upon the lawn in front of our house. Bush Hill, as it is called, though by the way there remains neither bush nor shrub upon it, and very few trees, except the pine grove behind it, — yet Bush Hill is a very beautiful place. But the grand and sublime I left at Richmond Hill. The cultivation in sight and prospect are superior, but the Schuylkill is not more like the Hudson, than I to Hercules. The house is better finished within; but, when you come to compare the conveniences for store-room, kitchen, closets, &c., there is nothing like it in the whole house. As chance governs many actions of my life, when we arrived in the city, we proceeded to the house. By accident, the vessel with our furniture had arrived the day before, and Briesler was taking in the first load into a house all green-painted, the workmen there with their brushes in hand. This was cold comfort in a house, where I suppose no fire had been kindled for several years, except in a back kitchen; but, as I expected many things of this kind, I was not disappointed nor discomfited. As no wood nor fodder had been provided before-hand, we could only turn about, and go to the City Tavern for the night.

The next morning was pleasant, and I ventured to come up and take possession; but what confusion! Boxes, barrels, chairs, tables, trunks, &c.; every thing to be arranged, and few hands to accomplish it, for Briesler was obliged to be at the vessel. The first object was to get fires; the next

to get up beds ; but the cold, damp rooms, the new paint, &c., proved almost too much for me. On Friday we arrived here, and late on Saturday evening we got our furniture in. On Sunday, Thomas was laid up with rheumatism ; on Monday, I was obliged to give Louisa an emetic ; on Tuesday, Mrs. Briesler was taken with her old pain in her stomach ; and, to complete the whole, on Thursday, Polly was seized with a violent pleuritic fever. She has been twice bled, a blister upon her side, and has not been out of bed since, only as she is taken up to have her bed made. And every day, the stormy ones excepted, from eleven until three, the house is filled with ladies and gentlemen. As all this is no more nor worse than I expected, I bear it without repining, and feel thankful that I have weathered it out without a relapse, though some days I have not been able to sit up.

Mrs. Bingham has been twice to see me. I think she is more amiable and beautiful than ever. I have seen many very fine women since I have been here. Our Nancy Hamilton is the same unaffected, affable girl we formerly knew her. She made many kind inquiries after you ; so did Mrs. Bingham. I have not yet begun to return visits, as the ladies expect to find me at home, and I have not been in a state of health to do it ; nor am yet in a very eligible state to receive their visits. I, however, endeavoured to have one room decent to receive them, which, with my own chamber, is as much as I can boast of at present being in tolerable order. The difficulty of getting workmen, Mr. Hamilton pleads as an excuse for the house not being ready. Mrs. Lear was in to see me yesterday, and assures me that I am much better off than Mrs. Washington will be when she arrives, for that their house is not likely to be completed this year. And, when all is done, it will not be Broadway. If New York wanted any revenge for the removal, the citizens might be glutted if they would come here, where every article has become almost double in price, and where it is not possible for Congress, and the appendages, to be half so well accommodated for a long time. One would



suppose that the people thought Mexico was before them, and that Congress were the possessors.

28 November. Sunday.

I wrote you thus far on Sunday last. Polly is on the recovery, but your brother Thomas is very ill, and almost helpless with the rheumatism. You recollect how he formerly had it. It seems as if sickness followed me wherever I go. The President got to town on Saturday ; I have not yet seen him or Mrs. Washington. We have had two severe storms ; the last was snow. Poor Mrs. Knox is in great tribulation about her furniture. The vessel sailed the day before the first storm, and had not been heard of on Friday last. I had a great misfortune happen to my best trunk of clothes. The vessel sprung a leak, and my trunk got wet a foot high, by which means I have several gowns spoiled ; and the one you worked is the most damaged, and a black satin ;—the blessed effects of tumbling about the world. Adieu. Write me soon. Love to all.

A. A.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Bush Hill, 26 December, 1790.

DEAR CHILD,

I WOULD tell you that I had an ague in my face, and a violent toothache, which has prevented my writing to you all day ; but I am determined to brave it out this evening, and inquire how you do. Without further complaint, I have become so tender, from keeping so much in a warm chamber, that, as soon as I set my foot out, I am sure to come home with some new pain or ache.

On Friday evening last, I went with Charles to the drawing room, being the first of my appearance in public. The

room became full before I left it, and the circle very brilliant. How could it be otherwise, when the dazzling Mrs. Bingham and her beautiful sisters were there ; the Misses Allen, and Misses Chew ; in short, a constellation of beauties ? I am serious when I say so, for I really think them what I describe them. Mrs Bingham has certainly given laws to the ladies here, in fashion and elegance ; their manners and appearance are superior to what I have seen. I have been employed, for several days last week, in returning visits. Mrs. Powell, I join the general voice in pronouncing a very interesting woman. She is aunt to Mrs. Bingham, and is one of the ladies you would be pleased with. She looks turned of fifty, is polite and fluent as you please, motherly and friendly.

I have received many invitations to tea and cards, in the European style, but have hitherto declined them, on account of my health and the sickness of your brother. I should like to be acquainted with these people, and there is no other way of coming at many of them, but by joining in their parties ; but the roads to and from Bush Hill are all clay, and in open weather, up to the horses' knees ; so you may suppose that much of my time must be spent at home ; but this, you know, I do not regret, nor is it any mortification to me. If I could send for you, as usual, and my dear boys, it would add greatly to my pleasure and happiness. Mrs. Otis comes frequently, and passes the day with me, and yesterday I had the whole family to keep Christmas with me.

The weather is winter in all respects, and such a plain of snow puts out my eyes. We have a warm side, as well as a cold one, to our house. If there is any thing we can do for you, let me know. You cannot regret your separation more than I do, for morn, noon, and night, you rest upon the mind and heart of your ever affectionate

A. ADAMS.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Philadelphia, 8 January, 1791.

MY DEAR MRS. SMITH,

I RECEIVED, by Mr. King, your letter of December 30th. I am uneasy if I do not hear from you once a week, though you have not any thing more to tell me than that you and your little ones are well. I think you do perfectly right in refusing to go into public during the absence of Colonel Smith. The society of a few friends is that from which most pleasure and satisfaction are to be derived. Under the wing of parents, no notice would be taken of your going into public, or mixing in any amusement; but the eyes of the world are always placed upon those whose situation may possibly subject them to censure, and even the friendly attentions of one's acquaintance are liable to be misconstrued, so that a lady cannot possibly be too circumspect. I do not mention this to you through apprehension of your erring, but only as approving your determination.

I should spend a very dissipated winter, if I were to accept of one half the invitations I receive, particularly to the routes, or tea and cards. Even Saturday evening is not excepted, and I refused an invitation of that kind for this evening. I have been to one assembly. The dancing was very good; the company of the best kind. The President and Madam, the Vice-President and Madam, Ministers of State, and their Madams, &c.; but the room despicable; the etiquette,—it was difficult to say where it was to be found. Indeed, it was not New York; but you must not report this from me. The managers have been very polite to me and my family. I have been to one play, and here again we have been treated with much politeness. The actors came and informed us that a box was prepared for us. The Vice-President thanked them for their civility, and told them that he would attend whenever the President did. And last Wednesday we were all there. The house is equal to most



of the theatres we meet with out of France. It is very neat, and prettily fitted up; the actors did their best; "The School for Scandal" was the play. I missed the divine Farren; but upon the whole it was very well performed. On Tuesday next I go to a dance at Mr. Chew's, and on Friday sup at Mr. Clymer's; so you see I am likely to be amused.

We have had very severe weather for several weeks; I think the coldest I have known since my return from abroad. The climate of Old England for me; people do not grow old half so fast there; two-thirds of the year here, we must freeze or melt. Public affairs go on so smoothly here, that we scarcely know that Congress are sitting; North Carolina a little delirious, and Virginia trying to give law. They make some subject for conversation; but, after all, the bluster will scarcely produce a mouse.

Present me kindly to your mamma and sisters. How I long to send for you all, as in days past; my dear little boys, too. As to John, we grow every day fonder of him. He has spent an hour this afternoon in driving his grandpapa round the room with a willow stick. I hope to see you in April. Congress will adjourn in March, and it is thought will not meet again till December.

Good night, my dear. Heaven's blessings alight on you and yours,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Philadelphia, 25 January, 1791.

MY DEAR CHILD,

You must not flatter yourself with the expectation of hearing from Colonel Smith until the February packet arrives. It is as soon as you ought to think of it. You see by the papers, that a minister is in nomination from England, and Mrs. C—— writes, will come out soon. Mrs.

P——, from whom I received a letter, writes me by the last packet, that Mr. Friere is certainly appointed from Portugal, and that he only waits for the arrival of Count ——, his successor, in England, before he sails for America. Mrs. P—— likewise communicates the agreeable intelligence of Mr. P——'s having forsaken the bottle, and that the Countess B—— had another child, and was vastly happy, beloved by her dear Count, &c. ; all in the true style of Mrs. P——. She desires to be kindly remembered to you and the Colonel.

Present me kindly to all my New York friends. That I was attached to that place is most true, and I shall always remember with pleasure the fifteen months passed there ; but, if I had you and your family, I could be very well pleased here, for there is an agreeable society and friendliness kept up with all the principal families, who appear to live in great harmony, and we meet at all the parties nearly the same company. To-morrow the President dines with us, the Governor, the Ministers of State, and some Senators. Of all the ladies I have seen and conversed with here, Mrs. Powell is the best informed. She is a friendly, affable, good woman, sprightly, full of conversation. There is a Mrs. Allen, who is as well bred a woman as I have seen in any country, and has three daughters, who may be styled the three Graces.

My best respects to your good mamma and family. Tell Mrs. C—— I hope she makes a very obedient wife. I am sure she will be a good one. I think I shall see you in April. Why do you say that you feel alone in the world ? I used to think that I felt so too ; but, when I lost my mother, and afterwards my father, *that* "alone" appeared to me in a much more formidable light. It was like cutting away the main pillars of a building ; and, though no friend can supply the absence of a good husband, yet, whilst our parents live, we cannot feel unprotected. To them we can apply for advice and direction, sure that it will be given with affection and tenderness. We know not what we can do or bear, till called to the trial. I have passed through

many painful ones, yet have enjoyed as much happiness through life as usually falls to the lot of mortals; and, when my enjoyments have been damped, curtailed, or molested, it has not been owing to vice, that great disturber of human happiness, but sometimes to folly, in myself or others, or the hand of Providence, which has seen fit to afflict me. I feel grateful for the blessings which surround me, and murmur not at those which are withheld. — But my pen runs on, and my lads, at whose table I write, wonder what mamma can find to write about.

Adieu. My love to the children. From your ever affectionate

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Philadelphia, 21 February, 1791.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of February 13th, and was happy to learn that you and your little ones were well. I wrote to you by the Chief Justice, and sent your silk by him. He promised me to visit you, and from him you will learn how we all are. We have had, ever since this month began, a succession of bad weather, and, for this week past, the coldest weather that I have experienced this winter. The ground is now covered with snow. This, if it would last, would let me out of my cage, and enable me to go to the assembly on the birth-day of the President, which will be on Tuesday next. On Thursday last I dined with the President, in company with the ministers and ladies of the court. He was more than usually social. I asked him after Humphreys, from whom I knew he had received despatches a few days before. He said that he was well, and at Lisbon. When I returned home, I told your father that I conjectured Mr. Humphreys would be nominated for Lisbon, and the next day the Senate received a message, with his nomination, as resident minis-



ter at the Court of Portugal ; the President having received official information that a minister was appointed here, Mr. Friere, as I before informed you. He asked very affectionately after you and the children, and at table picked the sugar-plums from a cake, and requested me to take them for master John. Some suppose, that, if your husband was here, he would have the command of the troops which are to be raised and sent against the Indians. If such an idea as that is in his mind, I am happy that your friend is three thousand miles distant. I have no fancy that a man, who has already hazarded his life in defence of his country, should risk a tomahawk and scalping-knife, where, though a conqueror, no glory is to be obtained, though much may be lost. I most sincerely hope he may be successful in his private enterprise ; for the way to command Fortune is to be as independent of her as possible.

The equanimity of your disposition will lead you to a patient submission to the allotments of Providence. The education of your children will occupy much of your time, and you will always keep in mind the great importance of first principles, and the necessity of instilling the precepts of morality very early into their minds. Youth is so imitative, that it catches at every thing. I have a great opinion of Dr. Watts's "Moral Songs for Children." They are adapted to their capacities, and they comprehend all the social and relative duties of life. They impress the young mind with the ideas of the Supreme Being, as their creator, benefactor, and preserver. They teach brotherly love, sisterly affection, and filial respect and reverence. I do not know any book so well calculated for the early period of life ; and they may be made as pleasant to them, by the method of instructing, as a hundred little stories, which are taught them, containing neither a rule of life, nor sentiment worth retaining, such as little John will now run over, of "Jack and Jill," and "Little Jack Horner." As a trial of their memory, and a practice for their tongues, these may be useful, but no other way.

I am sometimes led to think that human nature is a very

perverse thing, and much more given to evil than good. I never had any of my own children so much under my eye, and so little mixed with other children or with servants, as this little boy of yours. Whatever appears is self-taught, and, though a very good boy and very orderly, he frequently surprises me with a new air, a new word, or some action, that I should ascribe to others, if he mixed with them at all. He is never permitted to go into the kitchen. Every day, after dinner, he sets his grandpapa to draw him about in a chair, which is generally done for half an hour, to the derangement of my carpet and the amusement of his grandpapa.

Remember me affectionately to all inquiring friends. I hope to see you ere long.

Your ever affectionate mother,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

Bush Hill, (near Philadelphia,) 20 March, 1791.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I RECEIVED, by Dr. W——, your kind letter of February 14th. He was very punctual to his commission. He has been three times to visit us. He came out this afternoon to let me know that he should leave Philadelphia on Tuesday. By him I have to thank my dear sister for three letters, and to confess myself much in arrears. 'Tis in vain to say that I have had a sick family; that I have had a large family; that I have been engaged in company. These are poor excuses for not writing; nor will I exculpate myself by alleging that I wanted a subject. My pride would not suffer such a plea. What, then, has been the cause? "Confess freely, and say that it was mere indolence,—real laziness," as in truth I fear it has been. Yet conscience, that faithful monitor, has reprehended me very, very often. I was very sick; (so sick, that I have not yet

recovered the shock I received from it,) for near two months before I left New York. When I got to this place, I found this house just calculated to make the whole family sick ; cold, damp, and wet with new paint. A fine place for an invalid ; but, through a kind Providence, I sustained it, though others suffered. Happily, after a very tedious two months, Thomas recovered so as to get abroad ; but his health is now very infirm, and I fear an attendance upon two offices through the day, and studying through the evening at home, is not calculated to mend it. But it is a maxim here, that he who dies with studying dies in a good cause, and may go to another world much better calculated to improve his talents, than if he had died a blockhead. Well, knowledge is a fine thing, and mother Eve thought so ; but she smarted so severely for hers, that most of her daughters have been afraid of it since.

We have had a very severe winter in this State, as you may judge when I tell you that we have consumed forty cords of wood in four months. It has been as cold as any winter we have at the northward. The 17th and 18th of this month I dined with all my windows open, put out the fires, and ate ice to cool me ; the glasses at 80. This is the 20th. Yesterday it snowed nearly the whole day, and to-day it is a keen northwester ; and I presume it will freeze hard to-night. Yet the verdure is beautiful ; full as much as I shall find by the middle of May in Massachusetts, where I hope then to be. Yet I shall have some regrets at leaving this place, just as the season begins to open all its beauties upon me. I am told that this spot is very delightful as a summer residence. The house is spacious. The views from it are rather beautiful than sublime ; the country round has too much of the level to be in my style. The appearance of uniformity wearies the eye, and confines the imagination. We have a fine view of the whole city from our windows ; a beautiful grove behind the house, through which there is a spacious gravel walk, guarded by a number of marble statues, whose genealogy I have not yet studied, as the last week is the first time I have visited



them. A variety of fine fields of wheat and grass are in front of the house, and, on the right hand, a pretty view of the Schuylkill presents itself. But now for the reverse of the picture. We are only two miles from town, yet have I been more of a prisoner this winter than I ever was in my life. The road from hence to the pavement is one mile and a half, the soil a brick clay, so that, when there has been heavy rain, or a thaw, you must wallow to the city through a bed of mortar without a bottom, the horses sinking to their knees. If it becomes cold, then the holes and the roughness are intolerable. From the inhabitants of this place I have received every mark of politeness and civility. The ladies here are well-educated, well-bred, and well-dressed. There is much more society than in New York, and I am much better pleased and satisfied than I expected to be when I was destined to remove here. Adieu.

Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Quincy, 11 February, 1792.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I RECEIVED by way of New York your kind favor of October 28th and November 8th. I wrote to you by Mrs. Jeffry, and once since by way of Liverpool. I designed to have written by the last vessel, which sailed in December, but I waited to see how the election would terminate for Vice-President, and the vessel sailed without my letter. Few old countries have exhibited more intrigue and falsehood than the anti-federal party has done in the late election. The Clintonians have been indefatigable with their emissaries in propagating falsehoods, and in their efforts to unite all the antis in Clinton, that the competitor might be made as formidable as possible; and in every State where this party prevailed, they have been unanimous for Clinton. Several of the States were, however, duped by the artifice and lies

of the Jacobins, particularly North Carolina. The cry of rights of man, liberty and equality were popular themes. Their object was to represent the Vice-President as inimical to them, and as a man whose object was to introduce a government of King, Lords, and Commons, and a hereditary nobility. For this purpose they made unfair extracts from his writings, upon which they put their own comments. In one company in Virginia they roundly asserted that he had recommended to Congress to make a son of George the Third, King of America. In another, that he was opposed to the President, and that all the difficulty which he had met with from the Senate originated with him. This story the President himself contradicted. Another was, that the keeping the door of the Senate shut was wholly owing to his influence. In short, there was no end of the arts that were used. They tried them upon the New England States, but they were spurned at, and ten States, though not the most numerous, were unanimous, two votes excepted, in favor of the Vice-President. There were a number of well-written pieces published in Fenno's Gazette during the contest; but Freneau was the whole time employed by the party in publishing the most shameful abuse, and that paper was circulated through the Southern States with as much assiduity as ever Paine's Rights of Man were by the Revolution Society in England. This party had another object in view. They despaired of destroying Hamilton, unless they could remove the present Vice-President, and place in his stead the personal enemy of Hamilton. Their object was to overturn his funding system and destroy the government. Such is the spirit of a party who hate all order and all government.

In a country where property is so equally distributed; where no clergy fatten upon the spoils of the people; where no nobility exists for the Jacobins to level, but where every man, be he ever so poor, is protected by the laws, and not a real cause of complaint exists, yet do we daily see in embryo all the seeds of discord springing up from an elective executive, which, in the course of a few years, will

throw this nation into a civil war, and write in letters of blood those very truths which one of their best friends has forewarned them of, and that at the expense of his present popularity. I hope, however, that the period may be so distant that neither he nor his children may behold the dreadful scene. Since the last election, the President has been openly abused in the National Gazette,—abused for his levees as an ape of royalty; Mrs. Washington abused for her drawing-rooms; their celebration of birth-days sneered at; himself insulted because he has not come forward and exerted his influence in favor of a further compensation to the army. They even tell him that a greater misfortune cannot befall a people than for their President to have no competitor; that it infuses into him a supercilious spirit, renders him self-important, and creates an idea that one man only is competent to govern. They compare him to a hyena and a crocodile; charge him with duplicity and deception. The President has not been accustomed to such language, and his feelings will be wounded, I presume. It has been a subject of no small satisfaction to me that the bitterest party-writer has never dared to impeach either the honor, the honesty, or the integrity of the Vice-President, or fix a blemish upon his private character. Though they have not been so honest as Robert R. Livingston of New York, who said, nothing vexed him so much in all the French Revolution and the horrid cruelties they committed, as to see the fools by their conduct playing the game into the hands of that Mr. Adams, and proving the truth of his books. Why, said Benson, to whom the observation was made, “Mr. Adams reads the Scriptures, and he reads there that man is as stupid as the wild ass’s colt. Mr. Adams does not write the Scriptures; he only reads and believes.” But enough of this.

Remember me to all our friends in London and Clapham. I fear, if I do not write to him, Mr. Hollis will root me out of the Hyde, and substitute some French plant in my room; but tell him I claim a place there, and hold it as one of my rights, for I have never ceased to love and respect him,



though I have been much too negligent in assuring him so from my pen. And although I know we cannot agree in politics, we unite in wishing happiness to all mankind. You will see by our newspapers the rage for civic feasts, the sacrifice of the ox, and the jubilee for the success of the French over the Prussians and Austrians. They are citizen mad. Time enough for these exultations when they can soberly unite in a form of government which will not leave one man to prey upon and murder his fellow-creature with impunity. When I see them united for their common benefit, and returning to a sense of justice, wisdom, and virtue, then will I rejoice in their prosperity. Until then I mourn over them as a devoted people.

Affectionately yours,

A. ADAMS.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Quincy, 3 February, 1794.

MY DEAR MRS. SMITH,

I HAVE not written to you since I received yours of January 5th. I go from home but very little, yet I do not find my time hang heavy upon my hands. You know that I have no aversion to join in the cheerful circle, or mix in the world, when opportunity offers. I think it tends to rub off those austerities which age is apt to contract, and reminds us, as Goldsmith says, "that we once were young." Whilst our presence is easy to youth, it will tend to guide and direct them.

"Be to their faults a little blind,  
Be to their virtues ever kind,  
And fix the padlock on the mind."

To-morrow our theatre is to open. Every precaution has been taken to prevent such unpleasant scenes as you represent are introduced upon yours. I hope the managers will be enabled to govern the mobility, or the whole design of the entertainment will be thwarted.

Since I wrote you last, a renewal of the horrid tragedies has been acted in France, and the Queen is no more.

“Set is her star of life ; — the pouring storm  
Turns its black deluge from that aching head ;  
The fiends of murder quit that bloodless form,  
And the last animating hope is fled.  
“Blest is the hour of peace, though cursed the hand  
Which snaps the thread of life’s disastrous loom ;  
Thrice blest the great, invincible command,  
That deals the solace of the slumbering tomb.”

Not content with loading her with ignominy, whilst living, they blacken her memory by ascribing to her the vilest crimes. Would to Heaven that the destroying angel might put up his sword, and say, “It is enough ;” that he would bid hatred, madness, and murder cease.

“Peace o’er the world her olive branch extend,  
And white-robed Innocence from Heaven descend.”

I wish, most ardently, that every arm extended against that unhappy country might be withdrawn, and they left to themselves, to form whatever constitution they choose ; and whether it is republican or monarchical is not of any consequence to us, provided it is a regular government of some form or other, which may secure the faith of treaties, and due subordination to the laws, whilst so many governments are tottering to the foundations. Even in one of the freest and happiest in the world, restless spirits will aim at disturbing it. They cry “A lion ! a lion !” when no real dangers exist, but from their own halloo, which in time may raise other ferocious beasts of prey.

I hope to hear from you soon. I wrote to you by Dr. Appleton. Your grandmother has been very sick, and is still in so poor a way that I have very little expectation of her ever going abroad again. She is cheerful and pleasant, and loves to hear from her children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. She has ever been a woman of exemplary benevolence, a friendly, open, candid mind, with a naturally good understanding, and zealously anxious for the welfare and prosperity of her family, which she has always

promoted by every exertion in her power. Her only anxiety seems to be, lest she should live to be a burden to her friends ; but this will not be her hard lot.

Your mother,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Quincy, 8 March, 1794.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED your kind letter of February 12th, as well as one, by Mr. Storer, of February 2d. I have been every day since thinking that I would write to you, but a superior duty has occupied all my time for six weeks past. I have been only two days (when I was too sick to attend) absent from the sick bed of your grandmother. Your desire, that her last days might be rendered as comfortable as it is possible to make them, has been fulfilled. There has been no attention on my part, nor any comfort in my power to render her, that she has one moment wanted. She had spent a day with me the week she was taken sick. A severe storm had prevented me from hearing from her for a couple of days. I then learnt that she had a violent cold, as it was supposed. I went immediately to see her, and found her sick with a lung fever. Her granddaughters have been affectionate, tender, and watchful of her, but she has lived all the days of her appointed time, and is now ready to depart. Her senses are bright and quick, her hearing better than for years past. Upon looking back she has no regrets ; upon looking forward she has all hope and comfort. Her hourly wish is to be at rest. She took her leave of me this evening, with her blessing upon me and mine to the latest posterity. I told her to-day that you desired to be remembered to her. She asked me if I thought there was any thing, which she had, that you would accept of. I answered, that what she had I thought



her granddaughters, who were with her, deserved, and that I was sure you would value her blessing more than any thing else. "Well," she replied, "I pray God to bless her and her children ; and tell all who belong to me to consider, that a virtuous and a religious life is the only solid comfort upon a death-bed." She has mourned much, since her sickness, that she should never see your father again ; but she now seems reconciled to the thought of her approaching dissolution, which cannot be far distant. She has no rest, night nor day, her cough is so constant and troublesome ; and she can take scarcely any nourishment. If she had reached the 17th of this month, she would have been eighty-five years old. I can say with Pope upon a similar occasion, "that my constant attendance upon her has indeed affected my mind very much, and lessened my desire of long life, since the best that can come of it is a miserable benediction." "Nothing," says Seneca, "is so melancholy a circumstance in human life, or so soon reconciles us to the thought of our own death, as the reflection and prospect of one friend after another dropping around us. Who would stand alone, the sole remaining ruin, the last tottering column of all the fabric of friendship, seemingly so strong, once so large, and yet so suddenly sunk and buried ?"

Present me kindly to all my friends. In some future letter I may notice several things in yours ; but my mind is too much solemnized by the scene before me to add any thing more, than that I am

Your affectionate mother,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SMITH.

Quincy, 10 March, 1794.

MY DEAR MRS. SMITH,

ALTHOUGH the scenes in which I have been engaged for six

weeks past, have been very different from those which you describe, I have been amused and entertained by your account. Though I cannot say that I am charmed with your hero's personal accomplishments, as you describe them, yet you find

“A man of wealth is dubbed a man of worth;  
Venus can give him form, and Anstis birth.”

I think our ladies ought to be cautious of foreigners. I am almost led to suspect a spy in every strange character. It is much too easy a matter for a man, if he has property, to get introduced into company, in this country, of the best kind, and that without recommendations. The entertainment you describe was really very curious.

“Men overloaded with a large estate,  
May spill their treasure in a queer conceit ;”

and I am sure this was of that kind.

You may mix in these scenes, and sometimes join in the society ; but neither your habits, your inclination, nor your natural disposition are formed for them. By nature you have a grave and thoughtful cast of temper, by habit you have been trained to more rational and durable pleasures, and by inclination you delight more in them. The frivolity of the present day has been much increased by our foreign connexions. I pray Heaven to preserve us from that dissoluteness of manners, which is the bane of society, and the destroyer of domestic happiness. I think, with the poet,

“If individual good engage our hope,  
Domestic virtues give the largest scope ;  
If plans of public eminence we trace,  
Domestic virtues are its surest base.”

You complain that there is, in the rising generation, a want of principle. This is a melancholy truth. I am no friend of bigotry ; yet I think the freedom of inquiry, and the general toleration of religious sentiments, have been, like all other good things, perverted, and, under that shelter,

deism, and even atheism, have found refuge. Let us for one moment reflect, as rational creatures, upon our "being, end, and aim," and we shall feel our dependence, we shall be convinced of our frailty, and satisfied that we must look beyond this transitory scene for a happiness large as our wishes, and boundless as our desires. True, genuine religion is calm in its inquiries, deliberate in its resolves, and steady in its conduct; is open to light and conviction, and labors for improvement. It studies to promote love and union in civil and in religious society. It approves virtue, and the truths which promote it, and, as the Scripture expresses it, "is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated." It is the anchor of our hope, the ornament of youth, the comfort of age; our support in affliction and adversity, and the solace of that solemn hour, which we must all experience. Train up, my dear daughter, your children, to a sober and serious sense of the duty which they owe to the Supreme Being. Impress their infant minds with a respect for the Sabbath. This is too much neglected by the rising generation. Accustom them to a constant attendance upon public worship, and enforce it by your own example and precept, as often as you can with any convenience attend. It is a duty, for which we are accountable to the Supreme Being.

My pen has again taken a serious turn. I shall not apologize for it. Your own letter led to these reflections; and I am sure they flow from a heart anxiously solicitous for the happiness of you and yours. That they may make a due impression, is the ardent and affectionate wish of

Your mother,

A. ADAMS.

TO THOMAS B. ADAMS.

Quincy, 11 February, 1795.

MY DEAR SON THOMAS,

WHEN you address me again, let it be by the endearing epithet of Mother, instead of the formal one, — Madam. I



should have thought your partiality for your friends, the Quakers, would have prevented your substituting any other epithet. And now I have, in a few words, settled a point respecting titles; a subject which has occupied a great Legislature for many days, and occasioned much warmth and heat, the Madisonian party insisting that previous to naturalization all foreigners should renounce their titles; the other party contending that it was the privileges annexed to titles which rendered them of consequence; that by the American Constitution no man could hold a title; that naturalization excluded him from titles as an American; and that it was childish for that House to cavil at the name of Baron, Duke, or Lord, or Bishop, which could have no effect here, and that obliging a man to renounce them might affect his interest in other countries, where estates were frequently annexed to titles. Upon this the yeas and nays were called for. This occasioned much warmth, as it was then considered as an act to fix a stigma upon those who considered the subject too trifling in itself to occupy the House. But knowing the aversion in the Americans to the "bugbear," it was supposed to be done to create a new alarm, and raise a cry of aristocracy against all who opposed the motion. The vote was, however, insisted upon and taken, and northern and southern pitted against each other — 58 ayes, 32 nays.

I feel your embarrassment in a foreign country, the language of which you cannot speak. I know by experience how unpleasant it is, but that is a difficulty which will daily diminish. I rejoice that you are with your brother. I am sure either of you alone must have been *triste*. England you know, is the country of my greatest partiality. Holland appeared to me such a place of still life, Amsterdam and Rotterdam excepted, that I thought I could not be reconciled to become an inhabitant of it; and I perfectly assented to Sir William Temple's character of it, that it was a country where the "earth is better than the air, and profit more in request than honor; where there is more sense than wit, and more wealth than pleasure, more good nature than

good humor, where a man would choose rather to travel than to live; where he would find more things to observe than to desire, and more persons to esteem than to love." Although 'tis near a century since this character was drawn, you will soon perceive that it need not sit for a new likeness. You will find many things in the country well worthy your attention: some of those which I particularly remember, and which I would recommend to your notice. The statue of Erasmus upon the great bridge in the grand market-place at Rotterdam is one of them; and, indeed, Rotterdam itself is a curiosity. The spaciousness of the streets and the elegance of the houses surpass those at Amsterdam. The sight of houses, masts of ships, and tops of trees, promiscuously huddled together, is at once novel and romantic. If you had any opportunity, whilst in England, to visit any of the celebrated gardens and pleasure-grounds, were it only those within a few miles of the city, such as Osterley Place, Sion House, or Tilney House, they would give you a thorough disgust to the style of gardening in Holland, where

"Grove nods to grove, each alley has a brother,  
And half the platform just reflects the other."

And yet you will find much expense. These walks are all a soft sand, instead of the hard gravel of England. An object which struck me with the true sublime, was my ride from the Hague to Scheveling. The straight road and fine trees are pleasing, but at the end the broad ocean opens suddenly upon you, when you have no suspicion of it, and creates a most pleasing sensation. In the Prince of Orange's cabinet, at the Hague, I thought there was the neatest, though not the largest, collection of curiosities which I had met with, and, according to the custom of the country, preserved in the nicest manner. In the little room called the study is a fine collection of paintings by Dutch and Flemish masters.

There was one by Potter which you may have heard me mention. It is a rural scene, cattle drinking, and their

shadows reflected in the water. The flies upon the cows seem alive ; and a toad, sitting upon the grass, is equally excellent.

Leyden, Utrecht, Haerlem, all have monuments of art, worthy a stranger's notice ; and the painted glass in the windows in a church at Gorcum are a great curiosity. All these and many others which I visited I can traverse again with you ; and it renews the pleasure to recite it to one who is going to enjoy the same gratifications.

If the French get possession of Holland, I hope they will not continue to war with the fine arts as they have done. As you will see your brother's letter, you will learn domestic occurrences from that. Present my respects to old Mr. Dumas, to the Willinks families, and to all others who recollect

Your ever affectionate Mother.

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TO THOMAS B. ADAMS.

Quincy, 8 November, 1796.

MY DEAR SON,

I HAVE just received your letter sent by the *General Green*, Capt. Sheldon, via Rhode Island, dated August 27th. I believe I have scarcely lost a letter from you or your brother, notwithstanding the many hazards and chances to which they have been liable. Accept my thanks for your last communications.

I rejoice at the return of your health, strength and spirits ; and most sincerely wish that your constitution may be mended by the ordeal you have passed.

I have much upon my mind which I could say to you ; prudence forbids my committing it to writing. At this eventful period, I can judge of your solicitude to learn through a channel upon which you could depend, whatever affects the interests of our country. In a quotation from



the Chronicle you cannot expect truth. Falsehood and malevolence are its strongest features. It is the offspring of faction, and nursed by sedition, the adopted bantling of party. It has been crying monarchy and aristocracy, and vociferating anathemas against the "Defence," as favouring monarchy; and making quotations of detached sentences, as the atheist endeavoured to prove from Scripture that "there is no God," by omitting, "the fool hath said in his heart."

One writer asserts, that "Mr. Adams has immortalized himself as an advocate for hereditary government, as much as Mr. Jefferson has distinguished himself, in and out of office, as a true republican. Mr. Adams has sons placed in high offices, and who are, no doubt, understood to be what he calls the well-born, and who, following his own principle, may, as he hopes, one time become the seigneurs or lords of this country. Mr. Jefferson has daughters only, and had he the wish, has no male successor."

By such false and glaring absurdities do these miserable beings endeavour to deceive and delude the people into a distrust of their most disinterested friends, the real guardians of their liberties and defenders of their privileges.

I feel anxious for the fate of my country. If the administration should get into hands which would depart from the system under which we have enjoyed so great a share of peace, prosperity and happiness, we should soon be involved in the wars and calamities which have deluged other nations in blood. We should soon become a divided and a miserable people. I have been so long a witness to the scenes which have been acted for years past, and know too well what must be endured, to have any other sensations, when I look to an elevated seat, than painful solicitude and anxiety. It is a mark at which envy, pride and malevolence will shoot their envenomed arrows. Joy dwells in these dear silent shades at Quincy; and domestic pleasures, in peace and tranquillity. If I should be called to quit you, with what regret shall I part from you.

I feel perhaps too keenly the abuse of party. Washing-

ton endured it ; but he had the support of the people and their undiminished confidence to the hour of his resignation, and a combination of circumstances which no other man can look for. First, a unanimous choice. Secondly, personally known to more people by having commanded the armies, than any other man. Thirdly, possessed of a large landed estate. Fourthly, refusing all emoluments of office both in his military and civil capacity. Take his character all together, and we shall not look upon his like again ; notwithstanding which, he was reviled and abused, his administration perplexed, and his measures impeded. What is the expected lot of a successor ? He must be armed as Washington was with integrity, with firmness, with intrepidity. These must be his shield and his wall of brass ; and religion too, or he never will be able to stand sure and steadfast. Dr. Priestley, in a dedication of some sermons which he delivered last winter, and which he dedicated to the Vice President of the United States, observes to him, “ that religion is of as much use to a statesman as to any individual whatever ; for Christian principles will best enable men to devote their time, their lives, their talents, and what is often a greater sacrifice, their characters, to the public good ; and in public life, he observes, this will often be in a great measure necessary. Let a man attain to eminence of any kind, and by whatever means, even the most honorable, he will be exposed to envy and jealousy. And of course he must expect to meet with calumny and abuse. What principles can enable a man to consult the real good of his fellow citizens without being diverted from his generous purpose by a regard to their opinion concerning him, like those of the Christian who can be satisfied with the approbation of his own mind, and who, though not insensible to due praise, can despise calumny, and steadily overlooking every thing which is intermediate, patiently wait for the day of final retribution ? ”

Thus says the Poet ;

“ Fame for good deeds is the reward of virtue ;  
Thirst after fame is given us by the gods

Both to excite our minds to noble acts,  
And give a proof of some immortal state,  
Where we shall know that Fame we leave behind,  
That highest blessing which the gods bestow."

As I consider it one of my chief blessings to have sons, worthy of the confidence of their country, so I hope, in imitation of their father, they will serve it with honor and fidelity, and with consciences void of offence; and though they may sometimes meet with ingratitude, they will have

"The soul's calm sunshine and the heart-felt joy."

Adieu, my dear son. I hope to see you in the course of another year. Time, which improves youth, every year furrows the brow of age.

"Our years  
As life declines, speed rapidly away;  
And not a year but pilfers, as he goes,  
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,  
A tooth or auburn lock."

Thus, my son, in the course of three years' absence, you will find many depredations of time upon those whom you left advanced in life, and in none more, perhaps, than in your mother, whose frequent indispositions hasten its strides and impair a frail fabric. But neither time, absence nor sickness have lessened the warmth of her affection for her dear children, which will burn with undiminished fervour until the lamp of life is extinguished together with the name of

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, 8 February, 1797. ✓

"The sun is dressed in brightest beams,  
To give thy honors to the day." ✓

AND may it prove an auspicious prelude to each ensuing ✓



season. You have this day to declare yourself head of a nation. "And now, O Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant ruler over the people. Give unto him an understanding heart, that he may know how to go out and come in before this great people; that he may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" were the words of a royal sovereign; and not less applicable to him who is invested with the chief magistracy of a nation, though he wear not a crown, nor the robes of royalty.

My thoughts and my meditations are with you, though personally absent; and my petitions to Heaven are, that "the things which make for peace may not be hidden from your eyes." My feelings are not those of pride or ostentation, upon the occasion. They are solemnized by a sense of the obligations, the important trusts, and numerous duties connected with it. That you may be enabled to discharge them with honor to yourself, with justice and impartiality to your country, and with satisfaction to this great people, shall be the daily prayer of your

A. A.

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MRS. JAMES WARREN TO MRS. ADAMS.

Plymouth, 27 February, 1797.

It can be of little consequence to you, my dear Madam, whether your late adventure with me amounts to eight thousand dollars or only eight shillings. Yet it is my duty to let you know how it stands and to take your commands either to vest you again as an adventurer in the next class or remit to your order the sum of eight and fourpence. As I think it always best to rise in our subject instead of sinking from great to small things, my gratulations on Mr. Adams's elevation to the Presidential chair are secondary to my condolence, and may form a perfect contrast to your ill success in Harvard College lottery. The one, a small stake in a most precarious

game—the other, the best card in the pack. A second throw could make no addition but a crown, and that you have too much understanding and knowledge of the world to suppose it could enhance your happiness. I hope we shall meet again before you take up your residence in a southern clime.

Was I a courtier, I could say many pretty things on the present occasion both to you and to Mr. Adams—but his *old friend* will only observe, in her usual style of correspondence, that she sincerely wishes peace, prosperity and virtue may pervade the United States under his Administration—and may you, my dear Madam, feel no interruption of health nor any of those circumstances in human life, tenfold more painful, that might impede the tide of prosperity in which you have long sailed.

The bearer of this will wait on you next Tuesday for an answer to this, or any other commands you may have for your assured friend and

Humble servant,

MERCY WARREN.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

Quincy, 4 March, 1797.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I RECEIVED yesterday your obliging favor of February 27. I have been so little a favorite of fortune that I never once examined my numbers by the newspapers or other ways, concluding that those who were equally interested would take proper care for me. As I had formed no expectations, I met with no disappointment, and am quite pleased that my adventure should be appropriated to the promotion of science and literature. The few shillings in your hands be so kind to lay out in the purchase of some little books, and present them for me to the lovely Marcia—as a token of approbation of the sweet, engaging simplicity of manners which were so conspicuous in her.

For your congratulations upon a late important event accept my acknowledgments. Considering it as the voluntary and unsolicited gift of a free and enlightened people, it is a precious and valuable deposit and calls for every exertion of the head and every virtue of the heart to do justice to so sacred a trust. Yet, however pure the intentions or upright the conduct, offences will come,

“High stations tumult but not bliss create.”

As to a crown, my dear Madam, I will not deny that there is one which I aspire after and in a country where envy can never enter to plant thorns beneath it. The fashion of this world passeth away — I would hope that I have not lived in vain, but have learnt how to estimate and what value to place upon the fleeting and transitory enjoyment of it. I shall esteem myself peculiarly fortunate, if, at the close of my public life, I can retire esteemed, beloved and equally respected with my predecessor.

Old friends can never be forgotten by me. In that number I have long been accustomed to consider the General and Mrs. Warren. It will always give me pleasure to see them at this house or wherever else they may meet their friend and humble servant.

A. ADAMS.

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TO JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, 26 April, 1797.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

THIS, I hope, is the last letter which you will receive from me at Quincy. The funeral rites performed, I prepare to set out on the morrow. I long to leave a place, where every scene and object wears a gloom, or looks so to me. My agitated mind wants repose. I have twice the present week met my friends and relatives, and taken leave of them in houses of mourning. I have asked, “Was all this neces-



sary to wean me from the world? Was there danger of my fixing a too strong attachment upon it? Has it any allurements, which could make me forget, that here I have no abiding-place?" All, all is undoubtedly just and right. Our aged parent is gone to rest.<sup>1</sup> My mind is relieved from any anxiety on her account. I have no fears lest she should be left alone, and receive an injury. I have no apprehensions, that she should feel any want of aid or assistance, or fear of becoming burdensome. She fell asleep, and is happy.

Mary,<sup>1</sup> in the prime of life, when, if ever, it is desirable, became calm, resigned, and willing to leave the world. She made no objection to her sister's going, or to mine, but always said she should go first.

I have received your letters of April 16th and 19th. I want no courting to come. I am ready and willing to follow my husband wherever he chooses; but the hand of Heaven has arrested me. Adieu, my dear friend. Excuse the melancholy strain of my letter. From the abundance of the heart the stream flows.

Affectionately yours,

A. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

Philadelphia, 17 June, 1798.

You and I, my dear Madam, have trod together through one gloomy scene of war, havoc and desolation; and we have seen our country rise superior to oppression and despotism, and take its rank among the nations, presenting at this period the *only spectacle* of a free republic which has not been revolutionized by the gormandizing and insatiable

<sup>1</sup> The mother of Mr. Adams, who survived the illness described in a preceding letter, died at this time, at the age of eighty-eight.

<sup>2</sup> A niece of the writer.

thirst of that power which, like the grave, cries give, give, whilst the departed wealth, opulence and liberty of Batavia, the cruelly oppressed Geneva, Genoa, all Italy, and the partitioned and bartered Venice, with the barbarously sacrificed Switzerland and Berne, cry to us with an awful warning voice to behold their fate, and secure ourselves by a direct opposite conduct to that which has proved fatal to them. I would hope that the destroying angel may not be commissioned to visit us in wrath, but that he may visit us on an errand of love to warn us against those contaminating principles and abominations which have made all Europe one Golgotha. May the God of our fathers protect us, and if we must be scourged, remember mercy for us.

You observe, "that Providence has deposited a high trust in the hands of the President, and that it is optional with him from the confidence reposed in him by the people to abuse his power, or to continue the object for which our country has made such costly sacrifices."

Hastening to that period, which in Scripture is termed the life of man, having every thing at stake which can render the remnant peaceful or the future happy, reputation and honor, life, liberty and property, is it possible to have a wish or desire which is not interwoven with the present and future prosperity, freedom and independence of United America? It depends upon the people to say that they will remain a free and happy republic. Permit me to transcribe a sentence from an answer to an address presented by the inhabitants of the county of Otsego, in the state of New York :

"Your reliance on the good sense, fortitude and integrity of your fellow citizens, I trust, will not deceive you. *All depends* upon these virtues. If these fail us we are lost. Our constitution and administration all depend upon them. Our government without these aids has no power at home or abroad. We have no other principle of union or capacity of defence."

In another reply to the people of Pottstown, in Pennsylvania, are these words :

“Your confidence that I will not surrender the rights of the nation shall not be betrayed. If the nation were capable of such a surrender, (which it is not,) some other hand must affix the signature to the ignominious deed.”

With these sentiments will my friend live, and with these sentiments he will, like the brave avoyer, Steigner of Berne, meet death, if decreed to him.

The stay of our envoys in France is protracted to an alarming degree for their personal safety, and I had almost said for our national honor. The decree of the Directory respecting neutrals, and the declaration of Talleyrand that we could only *buy it off*, ought to have been the signal for the departure of our envoys. The cup of humiliation was full. What has since happened are its overflowings. They have borne it! but the indignation of their country spurns it. I enclose to you the last despatch. Heaven grant that it may be the last.

The testimonials in approbation of the measures pursued by the chief magistrate of the Union with respect to France, which, as you observe, have poured in from all quarters of the Union are indeed an encouraging and grateful reward for his laborious and hazardous exertions in the public service. Whilst the rising generation upon whom the hopes and expectations of all America are fixed for its security and defence, are zealous and sincere with their proffered lives and fortunes, their fathers may be permitted to repose, having performed their routine of active duty, and to spend the remnant of their days in devout supplications for the success of their offspring.

The President directs me to reciprocate the kind wishes of his friend General Warren and to assure him that he retains a pleasing remembrance of the part they have acted together in the defence of the liberties of their common country.

Mr. and Mrs. Otis the elder and junior are both well, and were with us last evening. I most ardently long for a visit to Quincy. The green fields and shady groves would be a pleasing contrast to the brick walls and crowded streets of Philadelphia, particularly so, if I could shut out all the political clouds which darken our horizon.



With a kind remembrance to every branch of your family, particularly the little Marcia, I am, my dear Madam,

Your friend and humble servant,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO THOMAS B. ADAMS.

Washington, 13 November, 1800.

WELL, my dear son, South Carolina has behaved as your father always said she would. The consequence to us, personally, is, that we retire from public life. For myself and family, I have few regrets. At my age, and with my bodily infirmities, I shall be happier at Quincy. Neither my habits, nor my education or inclinations have led me to an expensive style of living, so that on that score I have little to mourn over. If I did not rise with dignity, I can at least fall with ease, which is the more difficult task. I wish your father's circumstances were not so limited and circumscribed, as they must be, because he cannot indulge himself in those improvements upon his farm, which his inclination leads him to, and which would serve to amuse him, and contribute to his health. I feel not any resentment against those who are coming into power, and only wish the future administration of the government may be as productive of the peace, happiness, and prosperity of the nation, as the two former ones have been. I leave to time the unfolding of a drama. I leave to posterity to reflect upon the times past; and I leave them characters to contemplate. My own intention is to return to Quincy as soon as I conveniently can; I presume in the month of January.

Governor Davie arrived yesterday with the treaty. Judge Ellsworth was landed in England for the benefit of his health. The public curiosity will be soon satisfied. Peace with France,—a revenue increased beyond any former years,—our prospects brightening upon every side. What

must be the thoughts and the reflections of those, who, calling themselves Federalists, have placed their country in a situation full of dangers and perils; who have wantonly thrown away the blessings Heaven seemed to have in reserve for them? The defection of New York has been the source. That defection was produced by the intrigues of two men. One of them sowed the seeds of discontent and division amongst the Federalists, and the other seized the lucky moment of mounting into power upon the shoulders of Jefferson. The triumph of the Jacobins is immoderate, and the Federalists deserve it. It is an old and a just proverb, "Never halloo until you are out of the woods." So completely have they gulled one another by their Southern promises, which have no more faith, when made to Northern men, than lover's vows.

I have not heard from New York since I wrote you last.

I am, my dear Thomas,

Your ever affectionate mother,

A. ADAMS.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Washington, 21 November, 1800.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I ARRIVED here on Sunday last, and without meeting with any accident worth noticing, except losing ourselves when we left Baltimore, and going eight or nine miles on the Frederick road, by which means we were obliged to go the other eight through woods, where we wandered two hours without finding a guide, or the path. Fortunately, a straggling black came up with us, and we engaged him as a guide, to extricate us out of our difficulty; but woods are all you see, from Baltimore until you reach *the city*, which is only so in name. Here and there is a small cot, without a glass window, interspersed amongst the forests, through which you travel miles without seeing any human being.

In the city there are buildings enough, if they were compact and finished, to accommodate Congress and those attached to it ; but as they are, and scattered as they are, I see no great comfort for them. The river, which runs up to Alexandria, is in full view of my window, and I see the vessels as they pass and repass. The house is upon a grand and superb scale, requiring about thirty servants to attend and keep the apartments in proper order, and perform the ordinary business of the house and stables ; an establishment very well proportioned to the President's salary. The lighting the apartments, from the kitchen to parlors and chambers, is a tax indeed ; and the fires we are obliged to keep to secure us from daily agues is another very cheering comfort. To assist us in this great castle, and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanting, not one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. This is so great an inconvenience, that I know not what to do, or how to do. The ladies from Georgetown and in the city have many of them visited me. Yesterday I returned fifteen visits, — but such a place as Georgetown appears, — why, our Milton is beautiful. But no comparisons ; — if they will put me up some bells, and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. I could content myself almost anywhere three months ; but, surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had, because people cannot be found to cut and cart it ! Briesler entered into a contract with a man to supply him with wood. A small part, a few cords only, has he been able to get. Most of that was expended to dry the walls of the house before we came in, and yesterday the man told him it was impossible for him to procure it to be cut and carted. He has had recourse to coals ; but we cannot get grates made and set. We have, indeed, come into *a new country*.

You must keep all this to yourself, and, when asked how I like it, say that I write you the situation is beautiful, which is true. The house is made habitable, but there is not a single apartment finished, and all withinside, except the



plastering, has been done since Briesler came. We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience, without, and the great unfinished audience-room I make a drying-room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up, and will not be this winter. Six chambers are made comfortable ; two are occupied by the President and Mr. Shaw ; two lower rooms, one for a common parlor, and one for a levee-room. Up stairs there is the oval room, which is designed for the drawing-room, and has the crimson furniture in it. It is a very handsome room now ; but, when completed, it will be beautiful. If the twelve years, in which this place has been considered as the future seat of government, had been improved, as they would have been if in New England, very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed. It is a beautiful spot, capable of every improvement, and, the more I view it, the more I am delighted with it.

Since I sat down to write, I have been called down to a servant from Mount Vernon, with a billet from Major Custis, and a haunch of venison, and a kind, congratulatory letter from Mrs. Lewis, upon my arrival in the city, with Mrs. Washington's love, inviting me to Mount Vernon, where, health permitting, I will go, before I leave this place.

The Senate is much behind-hand. No Congress has yet been made. 'Tis said — — is on his way, but travels with so many delicacies in his rear, that he cannot get on fast, lest some of them should suffer.

Thomas comes in and says a House is made ; so to-morrow, though Saturday, the President will meet them. Adieu, my dear. Give my love to your brother, and tell him he is ever present upon my mind.

Affectionately your mother,

A. ADAMS.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Washington, 27 November, 1800.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED your letter by Mr. Pintard. Two articles we are much distressed for ; the one is bells, but the more important one is wood. Yet you cannot see wood for trees. No arrangement has been made, but by promises never performed, to supply the new-comers with fuel. Of the promises Briesler had received his full share. He had procured nine cords of wood ; between six and seven of that was kindly burnt up to dry the walls of the house, which ought to have been done by the commissioners, but which, if left to them, would have remained undone to this day. Congress poured in, but shiver, shiver. No woodcutters nor carters to be had at any rate. We are now indebted to a Pennsylvania waggon to bring us, through the first clerk in the Treasury Office, one cord and a half of wood, which is all we have for this house, where twelve fires are constantly required, and where, we are told, the roads will soon be so bad that it cannot be drawn. Briesler procured two hundred bushels of coals or we must have suffered. This is the situation of almost every person. The public officers have sent to Philadelphia for woodcutters and waggons.

You will read in the answer of the House to the President's Speech a full and explicit approbation of the Administration ; a coöperation with him equal to his utmost expectations ; this passed without an amendment or any debate or squabble, and has just now been delivered by the House in a body. The vessel which has my clothes and other matters is not arrived. The ladies are impatient for a drawing-room ; I have no looking-glasses but dwarfs for this house ; nor a twentieth part lamps enough to light it. Many things were stolen, many more broken, by the removal ; amongst the number, my tea china is more than half missing. George-

town affords nothing. My rooms are very pleasant and warm whilst the doors of the hall are closed.

You can scarce believe that here in this wilderness city, I should find my time so occupied as it is. My visitors, some of them, come three and four miles. The return of one of them is the work of one day; most of the ladies reside in Georgetown or in scattered parts of the city at two and three miles distance. Mrs. Otis, my nearest neighbour, is at lodgings almost half a mile from me; Mrs. Senator Otis, two miles.

We have all been very well as yet; if we can by any means get wood, we shall not let our fires go out, but it is at a price indeed; from four dollars it has risen to nine. Some say it will fall, but there must be more industry than is to be found here to bring half enough to the market for the consumption of the inhabitants.

With kind remembrance to all friends,

I am your truly affectionate mother,

A. A.

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{ TO COLONEL W. S. SMITH.

Quincy, 3 May, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of the raspberry bushes, and the pot of strawberry vines, for which accept my thanks. I have had them placed in a good part of the garden, and shall pay particular attention to them. I hope I shall be able to treat you with a plate of them, when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Quincy.

Whatever strange events occur in the political world, I think your path plain; the strict and impartial discharge of the duties of your office, with a prudent silence, without becoming the demagogue of any party.

Be so good as to send the enclosed by a safe hand. My love to Mrs. Smith and the children. Tell her I have com-



menced my operations of dairy-woman; and she might see me, at five o'clock in the morning, skimming my milk. Adieu, my dear Sir. Your affectionate

A. ADAMS.

TO THOMAS B. ADAMS.

Quincy, 12 July, 1801.

MY DEAR SON,

I AM much delighted to learn that you intend making a visit to the old mansion. I wish you could have accomplished it so as to have been here by this time, which would have given you an opportunity of being at Commencement, meeting many of your old acquaintance, and visiting the seat of science, where you received your first rudiments. I shall look daily for you. You will find your father in his fields, attending to his hay-makers, and your mother busily occupied in the domestic concerns of her family. I regret that a fortnight of sharp drought has shorn many of the beauties we had in rich luxuriance. The verdure of the grass has become a brown, the flowers hang their heads, droop, and fade, whilst the vegetable world languishes; yet still we have a pure air. The crops of hay have been abundant; upon this spot, where eight years ago we cut scarcely six tons, we now have thirty. "We are here, among the vast and noble scenes of nature, where we walk in the light and open ways of the divine bounty, and where our senses are feasted with the clear and genuine taste of their objects."

"Who, that has reason and his smell,  
Would not among roses and jasmine dwell,  
Rather than all his spirits choke  
With exhalations of dirt and smoke,  
And all the uncleanness which does drown  
In pestilential clouds a populous town."

At this season, it is best to take the packet by way of Providence.

I have received Mr. J——'s play. It is better executed than I believed him capable of performing. As a youthful specimen of genius, it has merit. I presume S—— has sent you Mr. Paine's Oration upon July the 4th. I think you will be pleased with it.

I am, my dear Thomas,

Affectionately your mother,

A. A.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

Quincy, 16 January, 1803.

MY DEAR MADAM,

It was with much pleasure I recognized the handwriting of an old friend, though only in the signature of her name. It recalled to mind those days of pleasurable intercourse when thought met thought, and a happy union of sentiment endeared our friendship, which neither time nor distance has effaced from my bosom. I have sympathized with you in sickness and in sorrow much oftener than my pen has detailed it to you. I, too, have tasted of the bitter cup of affliction; — and one is not, cut off in the meridian of life.

I was happy that my son had an opportunity of paying his respects to the ancient friends of his parents. We should be equally glad to see your sons whenever they pass this way. His visit to Plymouth was necessarily short, or he would have spent more time with you. You observe that you have not seen any effort of my pen for a long time. Indeed, my dear Madam, I have avoided writing, for these two years past, a single letter, except to my sister and children. The sacred deposit of private confidence has been betrayed, and the bonds of friendly intercourse snapped asunder to serve the most malicious purposes. Even a jocular expression has been made to wear the garb of sober reality. The most innocent expressions have been twisted, mangled, and tortured into meanings wholly foreign to the

sentiments of the writer. I have been ready to exclaim, with the poet,

“What sin unknown dip’d you in ink.”

There now lies before me an *Ægis* of the present year, in which is dragged to light the intercepted letter<sup>1</sup> said to have been written to your worthy husband, in the year 1775, and published in an English magazine. The design of the publisher appears from the introduction of the letter to make it believed that the person alluded to as “a piddling genius” was General Washington, and that the supposed writer was engaged in a plot to get him removed from the command of the army; that he possessed a sanguinary, revengeful temper, and was desirous of punishment without mercy; without adverting to the period when the letter was written, and the state of the country at that time. Before the Declaration of Independence had set it free from the shackles and chains which were prepared for it, and when we were hazarding an attempt to form a government for ourselves, it was natural for the letter-writer to inquire, Will your judges be bold? Will they feel firm? Will they dare to execute the laws under their present circumstances, with their capital in the possession of a powerful enemy, and many of their near and dear friends shut up within it, prisoners to them? The old actors are gone off the stage. Few remain who remember the perils and dangers to which we were then exposed, and fewer still who are willing to do justice to those who hazarded their lives and fortunes to secure to them the blessings which they now possess, and upon which they riot and scoff. Little regard is paid to that prohibition, “Thou shalt not bear false witness,” or to that system of benevolence which teaches us to “love one another”; and which I trust we, my dear Madam, shall never lose sight of, however reviled and despitefully used.

Your friends, though not exempt from the infirmities of age, are in the enjoyment of many blessings, amongst which is a comfortable portion of age and rural felicity.

<sup>1</sup> The history of this letter has been given in the appendix to the Letters of John Adams.



We enjoy the present with gratitude, and look forward to brighter prospects and more durable happiness in a future state of existence, where we hope to meet and rejoice with those whom we have loved and revered upon earth.

As to the little pecuniary matter between us, which, but for your reminding me of it, would never have been recollected by me, I know not where the papers are. I have not seen them nor thought of them for many years. I have not any thing upon book, and the amount can be but a trifle, and I beg you not to give yourself any further concern about it; as I have not any demand upon you, but for a continuance of that friendship and regard commenced in early life, and never designedly forfeited.

By your friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 20 May, 1804.

SIR,

HAD you been no other than the private inhabitant of Monticello, I should, ere this time, have addressed you with that sympathy which a recent event has awakened in my bosom; but reasons of various kinds withheld my pen, until the powerful feelings of my heart burst through the restraint, and called upon me to shed the tear of sorrow over the departed remains of your beloved and deserving daughter; — an event which I most sincerely mourn.

The attachment which I formed for her, when you committed her to my care upon her arrival in a foreign land, under circumstances peculiarly interesting, has remained with me to this hour; and the account of her death, which I read in a late paper, recalled to my recollection the tender scene of her separation from me, when, with the strongest sensibility, she clung around my neck and wet my bosom with her tears, saying, “Oh! now I have learned to love you, why will they take me from you?”

It has been some time since I conceived that any event in this life could call forth feelings of mutual sympathy. But I know how closely entwined around a parent's heart are those cords which bind the parental to the filial bosom; and when snapped asunder, how agonizing the pangs! I have tasted of the bitter cup, and bow with reverence and submission before the great Dispenser of it, without whose permission and overruling providence not a sparrow falls to the ground. That you may derive comfort and consolation in this day of your sorrow and affliction from that only source calculated to heal the wounded heart, a firm belief in the being, perfections and attributes of God, is the sincere and ardent wish of her, who once took pleasure in subscribing herself your friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

✓ Quincy, 1 July, 1804.

SIR,

YOUR letter of June 13th, came duly to hand. If it had contained no other sentiments and opinions than those which my letter of condolence could have excited, and which are expressed in the first page of your reply, our correspondence would have terminated here. But you have been pleased to enter upon some subjects which call for a reply; and as you observe that you have wished for an opportunity to express your sentiments, I have given them every weight they claim.

“One act of Mr. Adams's life, and *one* only (you repeat) ever gave me a moment's personal displeasure. I did consider his last appointments to office as personally unkind; they were from my most ardent political enemies.”

<sup>1</sup> The answer to this letter will be found in the correspondence of Mr. Jefferson, published by his grandson, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Vol. 4, p. 17.

As this act, I am certain, was not intended to give any personal pain or offence, I think it a duty to explain it, so far as I then knew his views and designs. The Constitution empowers the President to fill up offices as they become vacant. It was in the exercise of this power, that appointments were made, and characters selected, whom Mr. Adams considered as men faithful to the constitution, and where he personally knew them, such as were capable of fulfilling their duty to their country. This was done equally by General Washington in the last days of his administration, so that not an office remained vacant for his successor to fill upon his coming into office. No offence was given by it and no personal unkindness thought of.

But the different political opinions, which have so unhappily divided our country, must have given rise to the idea that personal unkindness was intended. You will please to recollect, Sir, that at the time these appointments were made, there was not any certainty that the Presidency would devolve upon you, which is another circumstance to prove that no personal unkindness was intended. No person, I am sure, was ever selected from such a motive, and so far was Mr. Adams from harboring such a sentiment, that he had not any idea of the intolerance of party spirit at that time. I know it was his opinion, that if the Presidency devolved upon you, except in the appointment of Secretaries, no material change would be made. I perfectly agree with you in opinion that those should be men in whom the President can repose confidence, possessing opinions and sentiments corresponding with his own; or if differing with him, that they ought rather to resign their offices than to cabal against measures which he may consider essential to the honor, safety and peace of the country. Neither ought they to unite with any bold and daringly ambitious character to overrule the Cabinet or to betray the secrets of it to friends or enemies. The two gentlemen who held the offices of secretaries, when you became President, were not of this character. They were persons appointed by your predecessor nearly two years previous to his retirement. They had



cordially coöperated with him, and were gentlemen who enjoyed the public confidence. Possessing, however, different political sentiments from those which you were known to have embraced, it was expected that they would, as they did, resign.

I have never felt any enmity towards you, Sir, for being elected President of the United States. But the instruments made use of and the means which were practised to effect a change have my utter abhorrence and detestation, for they were the blackest calumny and the foulest falsehoods. I had witnessed enough of the anxiety and solicitude, the envy, jealousy and reproach attendant upon the office, as well as the high responsibility of the station, to be perfectly willing to see a transfer of it; and I can truly say, that at the time of election, I considered your pretensions much superior to his who shared an equal vote with you. Your experience, I dare venture to affirm, has convinced you, that it is not a station to be envied. If you feel yourself a freeman, and can conduct, in all cases, according to your own sentiments, opinions and judgment, you can do more than either of your predecessors could, and are awfully responsible to God and your country for the measures of your administration. I must rely upon the friendship you still profess to entertain for me, (and I am conscious I have done nothing to forfeit it) to excuse the freedom of this discussion, to which you have led with an unreserve, which has taken off the shackles I should, otherwise, have found myself embarrassed with. And now, Sir, I will freely disclose to you what has severed the bonds of former friendship, and placed you in a light very different from what some viewed you in.

One of the first acts of your administration was to liberate a wretch, who was suffering the just punishment of his crimes for publishing the basest libel, the lowest and vilest slander which malice could invent or calumny exhibit, against the character and reputation of your predecessor; of him, for whom you professed a friendship and esteem, and whom you certainly knew incapable of such complicated

baseness. The remission of Callender's fine was a public approbation of his conduct. If abandoned characters do not excite abhorrence, is not the last restraint of vice, a sense of shame, rendered abortive? If the Chief Magistrate of a nation whose elevated station places him in a conspicuous light and renders his every action a concern of general importance, permits his public conduct to be influenced by private resentment, and so far forgets what is due to his character as to give countenance to a base calumniator, is he not answerable for the influence which his example has upon the manners and morals of the community?

Until I read Callender's seventh letter containing your compliment to him as a writer and your reward of fifty dollars, I could not be made to believe that such measures could have been resorted to, to stab the fair fame and upright intentions of one who, to use your own language, "was acting from an honest conviction in his own mind that he was right." This Sir, I considered as a personal injury; this was the sword that cut asunder the Gordian knot, which could not be untied by all the efforts of party spirit, by rivalry, by jealousy, or any other malignant fiend.

The serpent you cherished and warmed bit the hand that nourished him and gave you sufficient specimens of his talents, his gratitude, his justice and his truth. When such vipers are let loose upon society, all distinction between virtue and vice is levelled; all respect for character is lost in the deluge of calumny; that respect, which is a necessary bond in the social union, which gives efficacy to laws, and teaches the subject to obey the magistrate, and the child to submit to the parent.

There is one other act of your administration which I considered as personally unkind, and which your own mind will easily suggest to you; but as it neither affected character nor reputation, I forbear to state it.

This letter is written in confidence. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Often have I wished to have seen a different course pursued by you. I bear no malice. I cherish no enmity. I would not retaliate if it was in my

power ; nay more, in the true spirit of Christian charity, I would forgive as I hope to be forgiven. With that disposition of mind and heart, I subscribe the name of

ABIGAIL ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

✓ Quincy, 18 August, 1804.

SIR,

YOUR letter of July 22 was by some mistake in the post-office at Boston sent back as far as New York, so that it did not reach me until the eleventh of this month. Candor requires of me a reply. Your statement respecting Callender, and your motives for liberating him, wear a different aspect as explained by you, from the impression which the act had made, not only upon my mind, but upon the minds of all those whom I have ever heard speak upon the subject. With regard to the law under which he was punished, different persons entertain different opinions respecting it. It lies not with me to determine its validity or constitutionality. That devolved upon the Supreme Judges of the nation. I have ever understood that the power which makes a law is only competent to the repeal of it. If a Chief Magistrate can by his will annul it, where is the difference between a republican and a despotic government ?

That some restraint should be laid upon the assassin who stabs reputation, all civilized nations have assented to. In no country have calumny, falsehood and reviling stalked abroad more licentiously than in this. No political character has been secure from its attacks ; no reputation so fair as not to be wounded by it, until truth and falsehood lie in one undistinguished heap. If there is no check to be resorted to in the laws of the land, and no reparation to be

<sup>1</sup> The answer to this letter will be found in the correspondence of Mr. Jefferson, Vol. 4, p. 22.



made to the injured, will not man become the Judge and avenger of his own wrongs, and, as in a late instance, the sword and pistol decide the contest? All Christian and social virtues will be banished the land. All that makes life desirable and softens the ferocious passions of man will assume a savage deportment, and like Cain of old, every man's hand will be against his neighbour. Party spirit is blind, malevolent, uncandid, ungenerous, unjust and unforgiving. It is equally so under federal as under democratic banners, and it would be difficult to decide which is the least guilty. Upon both sides are characters who possess honest views and act from honorable motives; who disdain to be led blindfold, and who, though entertaining different sentiments, have for their object the public welfare and happiness. These are the characters who abhor calumny and evil speaking, and who will never descend to newspaper reviling. You have done Mr. Adams justice in believing him incapable of such conduct. He has never written a line in any newspaper to which his signature has not been affixed since he was first elected President of the United States. The writers in the public papers and their employers are altogether unknown to him.

I have seen and known that much of the conduct of a public ruler is liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Party hatred, by its deadly poison, blinds the eyes and envenoms the heart. It is fatal to the integrity of the moral character—it sees not that wisdom dwells with moderation, and that firmness of conduct is seldom united with outrageous violence of sentiment. Thus blame is too often liberally bestowed upon actions, which, if fully understood and candidly judged, would merit praise. And it is only by the general issue of measures, producing baneful or beneficial effects, that they ought to be tested. You exculpate yourself from any intentional act of unkindness towards any one. I will, however, freely state that which I considered as such. Soon after my eldest son's return from Europe, he was appointed by the District Judge to an office in which no political concerns entered. Personally known to you,

and possessing all the qualifications, you yourself being judge, which you had designated for office, as soon as Congress gave the appointments to the President, you removed him. This looked so particularly pointed, that some of your best friends in Boston at that time expressed their regret that you had done so. I must do him the justice to say that I never heard an expression from him of censure or disrespect towards you in consequence of it. With pleasure I say, that he is not a blind follower of any party.

I have written to you with a freedom which only former friendship would warrant; and to which I would gladly return, could all causes but mere difference of opinion be removed. I wish to lead a tranquil and retired life under the administration of the government, disposed to heal the wounds of contention, to cool the raging fury of party animosity, to soften the rugged spirit of resentment, and desirous of seeing my children and grandchildren heirs to that freedom and independence which you and your predecessor united your efforts to obtain. With these sentiments, I reciprocate my sincere wishes for your health and happiness.<sup>1</sup>

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

✓ Quincy, 25 October, 1804.

SIR,

SICKNESS for three weeks past has prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your letter of Sept. 11th. When I first addressed you, I little thought of entering into a correspondence with you upon subjects of a political nature. I will not regret it, as it has led to some elucidations, and brought on some explanations, which place in a more favorable light occurrences which had wounded me.

<sup>1</sup> For the reply to this letter see Mr. Jefferson's correspondence, Vol. IV. p. 26.

Having once entertained for you a respect and esteem, founded upon the character of an affectionate parent, a kind master, a candid and benevolent friend, I could not suffer different political opinions to obliterate them from my mind; I felt the truth of the observation, that the heart is long, very long in receiving the conviction that is forced upon it by reason. It was not until circumstances concurred to place you in the light of a rewarder and encourager of a libeller, whom you could not but detest and despise, that I withdrew the esteem I had long entertained for you. Nor can you wonder, Sir, that I should consider as a personal unkindness, the instances I have mentioned. I am pleased to find that which respected my son altogether unfounded. He was, as you conjecture, appointed a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, together with Judge Dawes, and continued to serve in it with perfect satisfaction to all parties, (at least I never heard the contrary) until *superseded* by the appointment of others. The idea suggested that no one was in office, and consequently no removal could take place, I cannot consider in any other light than what the gentlemen of the law would term a quibble, — as such I pass it. Judge Dawes was continued or re-appointed, which placed Mr. Adams in a more conspicuous light as the object of personal resentment. Nor could I, upon this occasion, refrain calling to mind the last visit you made me at Washington, when in the course of conversation you assured me, that if it should lay in your power at any time to serve me or my family, nothing would give you more pleasure. With respect to the office, it was a small object, but the disposition of the remover was considered by me as the barbed arrow. This, however, by your declaration, is withdrawn from my mind. With the public it will remain. And here, Sir, may I be allowed to pause, and ask whether, in your ardent desire to rectify the mistakes and abuses, as you may term them, of the former administrations, you may not be led into measures still more fatal to the Constitution, and more derogatory to your honor and independence of character? I know, from the observations which I have made, that



there is not a more difficult part devolves upon a Chief Magistrate, nor one which subjects him to more reproach and censure, than the appointment to office. And all the patronage which this enviable power gives him is but a poor compensation for the responsibility to which it subjects him. It would be well, however, to weigh and consider characters, as it respects their moral worth and integrity. He who is not true to himself, nor just to others, seeks an office for the benefit of himself, unmindful of that of his country.

I cannot accord with you in opinion that the Constitution ever meant to withhold from the national government the power of self-defence ; or that it could be considered an infringement of the liberty of the press, to punish the licentiousness of it.

Time must determine, and posterity will judge, with more candor and impartiality, I hope, than the conflicting parties of our day, what measures have best promoted the happiness of the people ; what raised them from a state of depression and degradation to wealth, honor, and reputation ; what has made them affluent at home and respected abroad ; and to whomsoever the tribute is due, to them may it be given.

I will not any further intrude upon your time ; but close this correspondence by my wishes that you may be directed to that path which may terminate in the prosperity and happiness of the people over whom you are placed, by administering the government with justice and impartiality. And be assured, Sir, no one will more rejoice in your success than

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

MEMORANDUM,

In the handwriting of Mr. Adams, subjoined to the copy of this letter :

✓ Quincy, 19 November, 1804.

✓ The whole of this correspondence was begun and con-

ducted without my knowledge or suspicion. Last evening and this morning, at the desire of Mrs. Adams, I read the whole. I have no remarks to make upon it, at this time and in this place.

J. ADAMS.

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TO MRS. PACKARD.<sup>1</sup>

Quincy, 11 March, 1805.

WITH the only beloved daughter of my late venerable and respected friend, I pour the tear of sympathy, and with a full heart participate in the sorrowful event, which has deprived her of one of the most tender and affectionate of parents ; one of the best of mothers ; one of the kindest friends ; one of the pleasantest companions ; and one of the most exemplary of women.

To me she was a " Friend of more than fifty years ripening," my earliest, my constant, and my oldest friend. Dear departed spirit, wilt thou still be my friend in those regions of immortal bliss, to which I trust thou art translated and whither I hope ere long to follow thee. With Dr. Johnson, I can say " hope dictates what revelation does not confute ; that the union of souls may still remain, and we who are struggling with sin, sorrow, and infirmities, may have our part in the attention and kindness of those who have finished their course and are now receiving their reward."

" Hope wipes the tear from sorrow's eye,  
And faith points upward to the sky."

Scarcely had the grave closed over the remains of my esteemed friend Madam Sargent, relict of the late Judge, ere it was again opened to receive those of one still dearer to me. It is more than fifty years since my acquaintance commenced

<sup>1</sup> Through the kindness of Mr. Benjamin Guild, of Boston, the Editor obtained this letter upon the death of Mrs. Quincy, from her daughter, the lady to whom it was addressed.

with her, who in that period became your mother. I was then a child, and carried by my grandmother, to visit with her, your grandmother, whom she taught me from my earliest infancy to venerate, as well as to love and respect her daughter. And this, before any connexion in the family united us in closer bonds. The early impressions I received, were indelibly stamped by time, and impressed by my own judgment, as I advanced in life, and became more capable of appreciating the many virtues of your late excellent parent, in the various relations she sustained, of daughter, wife, and mother, in each of which she had few equals, and I know not her superior. You have reason for gratitude and thankfulness, that she was spared to you, to a very advanced age, and with as few of its infirmities as is the lot of humanity; always possessing a cheerfulness and vivacity, which whilst it enlivened, delighted, for it was chastened with dignity and decorum.

“Peace, and esteem, is all that age can hope;” these she enjoyed through life, and having fixed her hopes and expectations upon a solid foundation, she is gone to reap the fruit of a well-spent life.

“Heaven gives us friends to bless the present scene,  
Resumes them, to prepare us for the next.”

Let us, my afflicted friend, improve this dispensation, to that useful purpose, and whilst I reflect upon the many endearing virtues and bright qualities, which adorned the life and conversation of your dear departed parent, strive to emulate her example, and transplant them into our own lives. Thus shall we honor her memory, and transmit it with lustre to posterity.

This is the fervent wish, and ardent desire, of your sympathizing friend,

ABIGAIL ADAM



TO MRS. SHAW.

✓ SISTER

✓ Quincy, 5 June, 1809.

I WAS unable to reply to my dear sister's letter of May 19th when I received it, being visited by St. Anthony, who scourged me most cruelly. I am sure I wished well to the Spanish patriots, in their late struggle for liberty, and I bore no ill-will to those whose tutelar saint, thus unprovoked, beset me. I wish he had been preaching to the fishes, who, according to tradition, have been his hearers; for so ill did he use me, that I came near losing my senses. I think he must be a very bigoted saint, a favorer of the Inquisition, and a tyrant. If such are the penances of saints, I hope to hold no further intercourse with them. For four days and nights my face was so swelled and inflamed, that I was almost blind. It seemed as though my blood boiled. Until the third day, when I sent for the doctor, I knew not what the matter was. It confined me for ten days. My face is yet red; but I rode out to-day, and feel much better. I think a little journey would be of service to me; but I find, as years and infirmities increase, my courage and enterprise diminish. Ossian says, "Age is dark and unlovely." When I look in my glass, I do not much wonder at the story related of a very celebrated painter, Zeuxis, who, it is said, died of laughing at a comical picture he had made of an old woman. If our glass flatters us in youth, it tells us truths in age. The cold hand of death has frozen up some of the streams of our early friendships; the congelation is gaining upon our vital powers and marking us for the tomb. "May we so number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom."

"The man is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour."

When my family was young around me, I used to find more leisure, and think I could leave it with less anxiety than I can now. There is not any occasion for detailing the whys

and the wherefores. (It is said, if riches increase, those increase that eat them ; but what shall we say, when the eaters increase without the wealth ? You know, my dear sister, if there be bread enough, and to spare, unless a prudent attention manage that sufficiency, the fruits of diligence will be scattered by the hand of dissipation. (No man ever prospered in the world without the consent and coöperation of his wife.) It behoves us, who are parents or grandparents, to give our daughters and granddaughters, when their education devolves upon us, such an education as shall qualify them for the useful and domestic duties of life, that they should learn the proper use and improvement of time, since "time was given for use, not waste." The finer accomplishments, such as music, dancing, and painting, serve to set off and embellish the picture ; but the groundwork must be formed of more durable colors.

I consider it as an indispensable requisite, that every American wife should herself know how to order and regulate her family ; how to govern her domestics, and train up her children. For this purpose, the all-wise Creator made woman an help-meet for man, and she who fails in these duties does not answer the end of her creation.

"Life's cares are comforts ; such by Heaven designed ;  
They that have none must make them, or be wretched.  
Cares are employments, and, without employ,  
The soul is on a rack, the rack of rest."

I have frequently said to my friends, when they have thought me overburdened with care, I would rather have too much than too little. Life stagnates without action. I could never bear merely to vegetate ;

"Waters stagnate when they cease to flow."

Has your son sent you or his sister the "Letters from the Mountains ?" I think them the finest selection of letters which I have ever read. You may with safety recommend them to all your young female friends. I cannot find in them any principle, either of morals, manners, or religion, to which

I cannot most heartily subscribe. Read them, and give me your opinion of them. Adieu.

Your sister,

A. A.

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TO CAROLINE A. SMITH.

Quincy, 26 February, 1811.

YOUR Letter, my dear Caroline, gave me pleasure. As all yours are calculated to enliven the spirits, I take them as a cordial, which during the residence of the bald-pated winter and a close confinement to my chamber for several weeks, I have been much in want of. And now what return can I make you? What can you expect from age, debility and weakness?

Why, you shall have the return of a grateful heart, which amidst infirmities is not insensible to the many blessings which encompass it. Food, raiment and fuel, dear and kind friends and relatives, mental food and entertainment sufficient to satisfy the most craving appetite, and the hopes and prospect of another and better country, even an heavenly.

“Eternal power! from whom these blessings flow,  
Teach me still more to wonder — more to know,  
Here round my home still lift my soul to thee,

And let me ever midst thy bounties raise  
An humble note of thankfulness and praise.”

Although my memory is not so tenacious as in youth, nor my eye-sight so clear, my hearing is unimpaired, my heart warm and my affections are as fervent to those in whom “my days renew” as formerly to those from “whom my days I drew.” I have some troubles in the loss of friends by death, and no small solicitude for the motherless offspring, but my trust and confidence are in that being who “hears the young ravens when they cry.” I do not know my dear Caroline, that I ever gave you encouragement to expect me



at the valley, although I should rejoice to be able to visit you — but I now look forward with the hope of seeing you here as an attendant upon your mother as soon as the spring opens and the roads will permit.

We have snow by the cargo this winter. Not a bird flits but a hungry crow now and then, in quest of prey. The fruit trees exhibit a mournful picture, broken down by the weight of the snow; whilst the running of sleighs and the jingle of bells assure us that all nature does not slumber.

As if you love me, proverbially, you must love my dog, you will be glad to learn that Juno yet lives, although like her mistress she is gray with age. She appears to enjoy life and to be grateful for the attention paid her. She wags her tail and announces a visiter whenever one appears.

Adieu, my dear child — remember me with affection to your brother and with kind affection to your honored father and also to your uncle whose benevolent qualities I respect and whose cheerful spirits have made “the wilderness to smile and blossom as the rose.”

Most affectionately,

Your Grandmother,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

TO MRS. CUSHING.<sup>1</sup>

Quincy, 5 March, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BELIEVE I may say with truth, that I have been your daily visiter through the dreary season of winter, and although

<sup>1</sup> This lady was the widow of William Cushing, for a long time an assistant Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Upon his decease, John Quincy Adams, although at the time in Russia, was appointed by President Madison to fill the station. The desire of the writer that he should accept the place is plainly marked in this letter, a desire which was strongly shared by her husband and his father. But the repugnance entertained by Mr. J. Q. Adams, to a judicial office was too decided to be overcome even by the joint urgency of the persons whom he most respected in the world. Of the causes of this repugnance, it is not possible to treat in this place. It is enough to say here that they have been very little understood.

not visible to you I have sometimes seated myself by your fireside and held sweet converse with you, and not unfrequently regretted that it was not my good fortune to have been situated near your dwelling — then would your cheerful countenance have enlivened the confinement I have experienced since I saw you. That week I was taken sick and am only now leaving my chamber. The weather has been so unpleasant, and the roads so obstructed by snow, that I have not been able to get abroad.

You will see by the public papers that the President has nominated and the Senate unanimously appointed my son as successor to your late ever dear friend in his office as judge. Although I knew by information received early in the session from Washington, that it was his wish to do so, I considered my son's absence as an insurmountable objection. I also knew what importunate interest would be made for many candidates. The appointment was altogether unexpected both to his father and to me. The unanimity with which it was assented to, and the general satisfaction which it appears to give to all parties, will, I hope and trust, induce him to accept the appointment which so honorably calls him back to his native country, and which I hope will shield him from that spirit of party animosity which has so unjustly assailed him. It will place him out of the reach of competition for office which occasions so much envy and jealousy amongst all parties. I would rather have him hold the office of judge than that of any foreign embassy or even chief magistrate of the United States.

I think, my dear friend, you will be gratified to think that the seat your friend so honorably held and so faithfully discharged will not be disgraced by his successor. Both his father and I have written to him to urge his acceptance of an office which he has heretofore, when mentioned to him, expressed a reluctance to filling, if ever he should be appointed to it. He will now have many motives to reconsider what then appeared to him a place to which he did not consider himself adequate.

I know the interest you take in whatever concerns your

friends will plead my excuse for making myself and family the subject of this letter. Pray let me hear how you are. My regards to your sisters, and believe me at all times

Your truly, affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO WILLIAM CRANCH.

Quincy, 17 October, 1811.

MY DEAR NEPHEW,

YOUR dear father has joined the spirits of the blessed made perfect. On Saturday last he was taken sick, appeared as he frequently has upon former days, was wandering in his mind,—but a general prostration of strength took place. He was sensible only for a few moments at a time; exhausted nature sunk to rest, without pain or struggle, and Heaven has been pleased to save him the anguish of following your dear mother to the tomb. She supports herself with the resignation of a true christian; saying “the Lord’s will be done, we are parted only for a few hours or days. I shall soon meet him in the realms of bliss.”

She can have but a few days longer upon earth. Emaciation, so that her bones are almost bare, together with swelling of her feet, hands, and face, show us daily that her passage to the grave is speedily hastening; and, my dear nephew, we have every reason to believe that your dear and blessed parents are gone and going to their God, and our God, whom they have faithfully served upon earth—and if we trust in him, as I hope we do, we shall be supported through life and through death.

I am, my dear nephew,

Your sympathizing and afflicted aunt,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.



TO WILLIAM CRANCH.<sup>1</sup>

Quincy, 25 October, 1811.

MY DEAR NEPHEW,

THE solemn and impressive scenes through which I have passed the last week, were too affecting to me to commit to paper. I thank God for that support and consolation which now enables me to address the only son of my dear departed brother and sister, endeared to me by every tie of affection and consanguinity, whose lives were a worthy example to all their posterity, and whose deaths were a comment upon their lives. As they had lived together in bonds of closest conjugal harmony and affection, near fifty years, so an all wise and merciful providence has removed them together to the realms of bliss; and this, my dear nephew, is a consolation to me, that neither is left to mourn the death of the other. That they were spared to us so long is another source of thankfulness. That they endured no more pain or agony in their departing moments, is among the blessings we have to be thankful for. That they have left such bright, and, as far as the imperfections of human nature would admit, spotless characters behind them, is the richest legacy they could transmit to their posterity.

Your father was seized with a lethargy which deprived him in a great measure of his speech, and prevented us from receiving from his dying lips the testimony which he would undoubtedly have given, to the truth and excellence of that religion of which he had ever been an ornament. Heaven was satisfied, and his work was finished. Your dear mother, through her whole sickness, was full of faith, hope, and charity. Although she struggled for life, for the sake of your father, and the dear orphans, I may say, of your sister, yet, when she was informed of his death, it did not affect her as it would have done in health.

<sup>1</sup> By the kindness of Judge Cranch, the Editor has been enabled to insert this and the preceding letter into the present collection.

I passed the three last days of her life chiefly with her, in two of which she appeared wandering; in one of them she did not mention your father, in the other she talked much of him, and in a kind of ecstasy said, "He has only stepped behind the scene; I shall know where to find him;" so upon another occasion she said, "his whole life was prayer;" that "now all her tie to life was broken; she was both ready and willing to die." Once, after a silence of some time, she broke out into an apostrophe — "O my son, my son" — and said no more. I presumed she had been thinking of the grief which the death of your father would occasion to you.

The day she departed, your uncle and I were in her chamber. She thanked us most tenderly for all our kindness to her, and her family, as she expressed herself; her mind appeared less wandering than through her whole sickness. She was perfectly collected, and called to her bedside my granddaughter, Susan B. Adams, and taking her by the hand, conversed with her upon the importance of early piety, upon the duty which she owed to God, to her parent, and her grandparents, and upon the duty and efficacy of prayer. She dwelt upon that with great eloquence and pathos, when offered in sincerity; said she had never offered to Heaven a petition which she did not see answered in receiving the blessing, or, if denied, she could trace the kindness of the hand in withholding it; recommended to her the repeated perusal of a sermon, in Dr. Paley's works, upon early piety, from this text, "Be sober minded;" having finished, (and I can only give you an imperfect sketch,) she said, "This is all I can offer you, Susan, for your kindness to me; it is my last legacy;" and so it proved. During this conversation, we were all but herself in tears. Her lungs were sound and strong. She appeared to me much more comfortable, and likely to continue for some time, than for two days before. The family being so numerous, I usually returned home to dine; I did so this day, never to see her living face more. In less than an hour, your brother, D. Greenleaf, came in and told me her

spirit had fled ; Heaven kindly spared me the last sad parting pang.

I shall not make any apology to you for my minuteness ; it is the sweet remembrance of the just, and will, I hope, solace you under your bereavement. Richard Norton has no doubt written to you of the respectable manner in which their remains were interred, accompanied by a numerous assembly to church, where Mr. Whitney delivered to a crowded audience an excellent discourse from Psalms : " The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance," in which, with much justice, he gave the characters of your respected parents. The sermon will be published.

I hope, my dear nephew, while I live, that you will consider me as a parent, and present me as such to your dear partner, although I can never supply her place to you, whose death you mourn.

Your uncle and the whole family unite in sympathy and affection.

I am, my dear nephew,

Your affectionate and sympathizing aunt,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

TO CAROLINE A. SMITH.

Quincy, 19 November, 1812.

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

Your neat, pretty letter, looking small, but containing much, reached me this day. I have a good mind to give you the journal of the day.

Six o'clock. Rose, and, in imitation of his Britannic Majesty, kindled my own fire. Went to the stairs, as usual, to summon George and Charles. Returned to my chamber, dressed myself. No one stirred. Called a second time, with voice a little raised.

Seven o'clock. Blockheads not out of bed. Girls in



motion. Mean, when I hire another man-servant, that he shall come for *one call*.

Eight o'clock. Fires made, breakfast prepared. L—— in Boston. Mrs. A. at the tea-board. Forgot the sausages. Susan's recollection brought them upon the table.

*Enter* ANN. "Ma'am, the man is come with coals."

"Go, call George to assist him." [*Exit* ANN.

*Enter* Charles. "Mr. B—— is come with cheese, turnips, &c. Where are they to be put?" "I will attend to him myself." [*Exit* CHARLES.

Just seated at the table again.

*Enter* GEORGE with "Ma'am, here is a man with a drove of pigs." A consultation is held upon this important subject, the result of which is the purchase of two spotted swine.

Nine o'clock. *Enter* NATHANIEL, from the upper house, with a message for sundries; and black Thomas's daughter, for sundries. Attended to all these concerns. A little out of sorts that I could not finish my breakfast. Note; never to be incommoded with trifles.

*Enter* GEORGE ADAMS, from the post-office,—a large packet from Russia, and from the valley also. Avaunt, all cares,—I put you all aside,—and thus I find good news from a far country,—children, grandchildren, all well. I had no expectation of hearing from Russia this winter, and the pleasure was the greater to obtain letters of so recent a date, and to learn that the family were all in health. For this blessing give I thanks.

At twelve o'clock, by a previous engagement, I was to call at Mr. G——'s for Cousin B. Smith to accompany me to the bridge at Quincy-port, being the first day of passing it. The day was pleasant; the scenery delightful. Passed both bridges, and entered Hingham. Returned before three o'clock. Dined, and,

At five, went to Mr. T. G——'s, with your grandfather; the third visit he has made with us in *the week*; and let me whisper to you he played at whist with Mr. J. G——, who was as ready and accurate as though he had both eyes to see with. Returned.

At nine, sat down and wrote a letter.

At eleven, retired to bed. We do not so every week. I tell it you as one of the marvels of the age. By all this, you will learn that grandmother has got rid of her croaking, and that grandfather is in good health, and that both of us are as tranquil as that bald old fellow, called Time, will let us be.

And here I was interrupted in my narrative.

I re-assume my pen upon the 22d of November, being this day sixty-eight years old. How many reflections occur to me upon this anniversary !

What have I done for myself or others in this long period of my sojourn, that I can look back upon with pleasure, or reflect upon with approbation? Many, very many follies and errors of judgment and conduct rise up before me, and ask forgiveness of that Being, who seeth into the secret recesses of the heart, and from whom nothing is hidden. I think I may with truth say, that in no period of my life have the vile passions had control over me. I bear no enmity to any human being; but, alas! as Mrs. Placid said to her friend, by which of thy good works wouldst thou be willing to be judged? I do not believe, with some divines, that all our good works are but as filthy rags; the example which our great Master has set before us, of purity, benevolence, obedience, submission and humility, are virtues which, if faithfully practised, will find their reward; or why has he pronounced so many benedictions upon them in his sermon on the mount? I would ask with the poet,

“Is not virtue in mankind  
The nutriment that feeds the mind,  
Then who, with reason, can pretend  
That all effects of virtue end?”

I am one of those who are willing to rejoice always. My disposition and habits are not of the gloomy kind. I believe that “to enjoy is to obey.”

“Yet not to Earth’s contracted span,  
Thy goodness let me bound;  
Or think thee Lord alone of man,  
Whilst thousand worlds are round.”

I have many more subjects, dear Caroline, which I want to write to you upon.

27 November.

Yesterday was our Thanksgiving day. In our own way, and with tempers suited to the occasion, we gave thanks for those blessings which we felt had been granted to us in the year past, for the restoration and recovery from dangerous sickness of members of our own family ; and, although in one instance we had been called to weep, in many others we had cause of rejoicing. We were in health ; we had good news from a far country ; we had food and raiment, and we still enjoyed liberty, and our rulers were men of our own election, and removable by the people. Dear Caroline, I have trespassed upon you. I will close by saying, that your uncle and aunt, with their three children, your aunt Smith, George and John Adams, with our own family, made the joyful group. We remembered the absent, and sent our wishes to Russia and the valley ; but wishes were empty. — No, they bore upon their wings blessings, a portion of which were for my dear Caroline,

From her affectionate grandmother,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO MRS. WARREN.

Quincy, 30 December, 1812.

MY DEAR MADAM,

ALTHOUGH at the eleventh hour, I will not suffer the year to close upon me without noticing your repeated favors and thanking you for them.

So long as we are inhabitants of this earth and possess any of our faculties, we cannot be indifferent to the state of our country, our posterity and our friends. Personally we have arrived so near the close of the drama that we can experience but few of the evils which await the rising generation.



We have passed through one revolution and have happily arrived at the goal, but the ambition, injustice and plunder of foreign powers have again involved us in war, the termination of which is not given us to see.

If we have not "the gorgeous palaces or the cloud-capp'd towers" of Moscow to be levelled with the dust, nor a million of victims to sacrifice upon the altar of ambition, we have our firesides, our comfortable habitations, our cities, our churches and our country to defend, our rights, privileges and independence to preserve. And for these are we not justly contending? Thus it appears to me; yet I hear from our pulpits and read from our presses that it is an unjust, a wicked, a ruinous and unnecessary war. If I give an opinion with respect to the conduct of our native State, I cannot do it with approbation. She has had much to complain of as it respected a refusal of naval protection, yet that cannot justify her in paralyzing the arm of government when raised for her defence and that of the nation. A house divided against itself — and upon that foundation do our enemies build their hopes of subduing us. May it prove a sandy one to them.

You once asked what does Mr. Adams think of Napoleon? The reply was, I think, that after having been the scourge of nations, he should himself be destroyed. We have seen him run an astonishing career. Is not his measure full? Like Charles the XII. of Sweden, he may find in Alexander another Peter. Much, my friend, might we moralize upon these great events, but we know but in part and we see but in part. The longer I live, the more wrapt in clouds and darkness does the future appear to me.

"Who sees with equal eye as God of all  
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,  
Atoms to atoms into ruin hurled  
And now a bubble burst and now a world."

With this letter I forward to you a token of love and friendship. I hope it will not be the less valuable to you for combining with a lock of my own hair that of your ancient

friend's at his request. The lock of hair with which you favoured me, from a head which I shall ever respect, I have placed in a handkerchief-pin set with pearls in the same manner with the ring. I shall hold it precious. Thus have I disposed of the precious metal sent by my son.

If the Spring should find me in health and my friend also, I shall wish to renew my visit to Plymouth, that I may again embrace you and be invigorated from a recollection of those days when we held sweet converse together.

With compliments and regards to every member of your family, I subscribe myself

Your affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

TO MRS. CUSHING.

Quincy, 18 February, 1813.

MY DEAR MRS. CUSHING,

I HAVE been contemplating writing to you for several weeks past; to inquire after your health and that of your family through the winter, but I have delayed it until the voice of friendship bids me sympathize with the bereaved sisters and relatives over the brave youth who has fallen in defence of the injured rights and honor of his country.

"How beautiful is death when earned by virtue.  
Who would not be that youth? What pity is it  
That we can die but once to serve our country?"

So spake the Roman from the mouth of Cato. So said the Father over the dead body of his son.

"It is when the foes fly before them that fathers delight in their sons. But their sighs burst forth in secret when their young warriors yield."<sup>1</sup>

In the agony of grief for the loss of those most dear, it is an alleviation to the wounded bosom to know that they died

<sup>1</sup> Ossian.

covered with glory in the arms of victory. Long will young Aylwin be remembered and regretted, "by all his country's wishes blest."

To all of you, my afflicted friends, I wish consolation and support from a higher source than the honor and fame which man can bestow ;

And am your sympathizing friend,

A. ADAMS.

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.<sup>1</sup>

Quincy, 3 February, 1814.

DEAR SIR,

EVER since your letter to the President, of December last, I have had a great inclination to address a letter to Mr. Vanderkemp ; and, being now confined to my chamber, by an attack of the rheumatism, I find a leisure hour to address my friend in his solitude.

And in the first place, to put him perfectly at his ease, I assure him that I make not any pretensions to the character of a learned lady, and therefore, according to his creed, I am entitled to his benevolence. I can say, with Gay's hermit,

"The little knowledge I have gained,  
Is all from simple nature drained."

I agree with Mr. Vanderkemp, that, in declaring his opinion, he has expressed that of most gentlemen, the true cause of which I shall trace no farther than that they consider a companion more desirable than a rival. In reading the life of Madame de Staël, I learn that it was her superior talents and learning, perhaps too ostentatiously displayed, which produced that coldness, estrangement, and unhappi-

<sup>1</sup> The late Judge Vanderkemp presented the letters which he had received from Mrs. Adams to Mrs. Quincy, the wife of the President of Harvard University. By her, they have been, with great kindness, submitted to the disposal of the Editor, who only regrets the necessity he is under, of confining himself to a single specimen.



ness, which marred all her pleasure with the Baron de Staël, soured every domestic enjoyment, and was the occasion of that sarcastic question to her by the Emperor Bonaparte. Upon some occasion, she had solicited an interview with him, and recommended to him some measure for him to pursue. He heard her, but made her no other reply than this ; “ Madam, who educates your children ? ”

I like your portrait of female excellence. Solomon has also drawn one in the character of a virtuous woman ; but, if a sound understanding had not been united with virtuous habits and principles, is it probable that he would have represented the heart of her husband as safely trusting in her ? or that he would have derived so much lustre from her character, as to be known in the gates, when he sat with the elders of the land ? It is very certain, that a well-informed woman, conscious of her nature and dignity, is more capable of performing the relative duties of life, and of engaging and retaining the affections of a man of understanding, than one whose intellectual endowments rise not above the common level.

There are so few women who may be really called learned, that I do not wonder they are considered as black swans. It requires such talents and such devotion of time and study, as to exclude the performance of most of the domestic cares and duties which exclusively fall to the lot of most females in this country. I believe nature has assigned to each sex its particular duties and sphere of action, and to act well your part, “ there all the honor lies.”

Have you seen John Randolph’s letter, and Mr. Lloyd’s reply ?

Present me in friendly terms to Mrs. Vanderkemp. Tell her, I wish we were neighbours. I should then have a pleasure which our residence in the country deprives us of, that of the society and converse of a gentleman of taste, science, and extensive information ; and, although much of his learning might be above my comprehension, his benevolence, politeness, and urbanity would render it grateful, and be in unison with the good-will and friendship entertained for him by

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

TO MRS. WARREN.

Quincy, 5 May, 1814.

DEAR MADAM,

I MOST sincerely sympathize with you and the bereaved, distressed family, at Washington, in the dispensation of Heaven which has broken asunder the last paternal ligament, and left you the only surviving pillar of the once numerous edifice. To us who, in the course of nature expect and hope to join the spirits of the just, are consolations which to the bereaved widow and children are more distant and remote, for they may survive to feel all the anguish of a long separation and to lament the loss of a tender, affectionate, attentive husband and doating father. He died at his post, probably a sacrifice to over exertion and too great a weight and press of business for his years. He died with the love, respect and esteem of his country, having for twenty-five years exhibited a striking example of attention and punctuality worthy of imitation.

/ If we live to old age, "string after string is severed from the heart" until, as one expresses it, we have scarcely any thing left to resign but breath. / To a mind elevated and endowed like your own, full of confidence and hope, you can look through nature up to nature's God, and "trust the ruler with his skies," — sure that all events are permitted and controlled by infinite wisdom, justice and benevolence.

The circumstance of losing a friend<sup>1</sup> distant from home must add to the pain of my dear relative, and her return to her own habitation be solitary indeed. Mr. Otis was a most pleasant companion both at home and abroad. When at Philadelphia, I lived in constant habits of intimacy and friendly intercourse with the family, and was witness to the cheerfulness and urbanity of his manners, which in public life secured him against the shafts of malice. He was always moderate, and never imposed his own opinions upon

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Allyne Otis, the youngest brother of Mrs. Warren.

those who dissented from him upon political questions. He was firm in his own and decided, but left others the same liberty. Accordingly, for twenty-five years, that he acted as secretary to the Senate of the United States, amidst all the conflicts of party, he retained the love and esteem of that body.

I need not say to you, who so well know his character, that he adorned the doctrine which he professed as a Christian, liberal, candid and charitable. His uniform habits of temperance and sobriety and uninterrupted health gave him a vigor which promised a much longer duration and made him dear to his family and friends. Few of the infirmities of age were discoverable in him. His loss will be most keenly felt by his partner and his dear daughters.

I know, my dear Madam, you will offer to them all the sympathy and consolation which your own experience can suggest and which supported you through a similar trying scene. That you may still enjoy the consolations and support of the Most High, and finally be received to the mansions of the blest, is ardently hoped for

By your affectionate friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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TO MRS. SHAW.

Quincy, 30 December, 1814.

MY DEAR SISTER,

YOUR imagination was so glowingly alive in your last descriptive letter that mine lags after it in vain. From the vivid warmth of the coloring I should fancy that the cold north wind had not blown rudely upon you this season.

For the numberless blessings which have crowned the past year my heart glows with gratitude and my mind expands in grateful acknowledgment to that bountiful Being who hath made me to differ from many others.

In the year past, several of my friends and acquaintance



have ceased from their labors. Their works remain with us. In the death of Mrs. Warren<sup>1</sup> and Vice President Gerry I recognize that of no ordinary characters. Mrs. Warren was like a shock of corn fully ripe for the harvest. The celestial spirit which animated the clay was not altogether extinct. It ascended to catch new life and vigor in the pure regions of bliss and to share in the joys of our heavenly inheritance.

With Mr. Gerry died one of the first and oldest patriots of the revolution — a firm, steady and unshaken friend of more than fifty years ripening. “Such friends grow not thick on every bough.” His age promised a longer life and his usefulness was not impaired by it. “Back-wounding calumny the whitest virtue strikes.” He shared largely in the abuse of party factions and may have been kindly recalled before the next election lacerated his reputation and bespattered his fair and honorable fame. I rejoice that Mr. Gore’s motion in the Senate prevailed, and think it an honorable trait in that gentleman’s character to whom Mr. Gerry had been a successful political competitor and rival, to show himself superior to political division, and become the friend of the family by exerting himself to assist it. This is the temper and spirit of a Christian.

Adieu. Your sister,

A. A.

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TO MRS. DEXTER.<sup>2</sup>

Quincy, 12 May, 1816.

DEAR MADAM,

How can I address you, or offer human consolation for a

<sup>1</sup> Of Mrs. Warren, so often mentioned in this collection, and to whom many of these letters are addressed, it is much to be regretted that some more extended notice does not exist. She was one of the remarkable women of the heroic age of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> To Mrs. Dexter, the Editor is indebted for furnishing him, at his request, with this letter written upon the death of her husband. Mr. Samuel Dexter had been a member of Mr. Adams’s cabinet in the period of his Presidency.

wound which must bleed afresh at every attempt to assuage it?

Yet if the tears of friendship, and a nation's tears can afford any relief, be assured, dear Madam, they flow from all honest hearts, for you, for your children and for a country which mourns one of its brightest luminaries extinguished. A great man, fallen in the zenith of his glory — and in the estimation of his ancient friend, the ablest statesman of his age which his native state could boast. It is no common loss we bewail. Such an assemblage of powerful talents rarely meet in one individual united to such an upright and independent mind, which soared above all low concerns, and was elevated beyond all selfish considerations and party views.

In domestic life, your own heart alone can do justice to his memory. The news of the death of Mr. Dexter so sudden, so unexpected, was felt by Mr. Adams and myself with the keenest anguish. Out of your own immediate circle you have not any one who more sincerely, tenderly and affectionately sympathizes with you, or who more fervently supplicates the Supreme Being to support and sustain you than your sorrowing friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

## APPENDIX.





# APPENDIX.

## No. I.

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JOHN ADAMS TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 14 December, 1781.

MY DEAR SON,

YOUR letter of 21 August, O. S., the first I have received, reached me only two or three days ago.

I am pleased to see your handwriting improve, as well as your judgment ripen, as you travel; but I am above all happy to find that your behavior has been such as to gain the confidence of Mr. Dana, so far as to employ you in copying. This employment requires a great deal of patience and steadiness, as well as care. It will be of vast use to you, to be admitted thus early into business, especially into business of such importance.

Make it a rule, my dear son, to lose no time. There is not a moral precept of clearer obligation or of greater import. Make it the grand maxim of your life, and it cannot fail to be happy and useful to the world.

You have my consent to have any masters which Mr. Dana thinks proper for you. But you will have none upon whom I shall depend so much as upon him. He will form your moral and political principles, and give you a taste for letters as well as business, if you can but be so wise and happy as to continue to deserve his confidence, and be admitted to assist him in copying his business.

Write me often. Let me know the state of education and letters in St. Petersburg. Pray do you hear any thing of a passage by land from Russia to America? What discoveries have been made?

It is not necessary to add my name when I assure you of my affection.

## JOHN ADAMS TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 15 December, 1781.

MY DEAR CHILD,

THIS day Mr. Sayre arrived with your letter of the 12-23 of October. Yours of August I answered yesterday.

You have not informed me whether the houses are built of brick, stone, or wood ; whether they are seven stories high, or only one ; how they are glazed ; whether they have chimneys as in Spain ; what public buildings, what maison de ville or st  te house ; what churches ; what palaces ; what statuary ; what paintings, music, spectacles, &c.

You have said nothing of the religion of the country ; whether it is Catholic or Protestant ; what is the national church ; whether there are many sectaries ; whether there is a toleration of various religions, &c.

I think the price for a master is intolerable. If there is no academy nor school, nor a master to be had, I really don't know what to say to your staying in Russia. You had better be at Leyden, where you might be in a regular course of education. You might come in the spring in a Russian, Swedish, or Prussian vessel to Embden perhaps, or Hamborough, and from thence here in a neutral bottom. Still I am afraid of your being too troublesome to Mr. D. However, I rely upon it, that you follow your studies with your wonted assiduity. It is strange if no dictionary can be found in French or English.

I don't perceive that you take pains enough with your handwriting. Believe me from experience, if you now in your youth resolutely conquer your impatience, and resolve never to write the most familiar letter, or trifling card, without attention and care, it will save you a vast deal of time, and trouble too, every day of your whole life. When the habit is got, it is easier to write well than ill ; but this habit is only to be acquired in early life.

God bless my dear son, and preserve his health and his manners from the numberless dangers that surround us wherever we go in this world. So prays your affectionate father.

J. ADAMS.



## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 11-2 January, 1782.

HONORED SIR,

LAST night I received your letters of the 14th and 15th December. You make me a great number of questions at a time, but I will answer them as well as I can.

The houses are for the most part built of brick, and plastered over. They are from two to four stories high. They are glazed with large panes, as in France. In the winter they have double windows, which are taken down in the spring, that is, in the months of May or June. They have no chimneys but stoves, of which I have given a description to Mr. Thaxter. I don't know any thing about their state house, but I believe it is nothing extraordinary. Voltaire says there are thirty-five churches here, but I believe, if any body had set him about finding them out, he would have found it very difficult. There is a church building here upon the plan of St. Peter's at Rome. It was to be entirely finished in fifteen years, has been already worked upon twenty-five, and is far from being half done. There are, I believe, but two palaces in the city, in one of which her Majesty resides in the winter. It is called the summer palace. The empress stays all summer at a palace called Czarskozelo, about twenty-five English miles from the city. There is no famous statuary or paintings that I know of. There are concerts once a week in several places. There is a German, an Italian and a French comedy here. The last is in the palace.

The religion is neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant, but, as Voltaire has, in his history of Peter the Great, treated upon that subject, I will give you what he says about it.

[Here follow extracts carefully made from the second chapter of the first part of Voltaire's work.]

I don't wonder you find it strange that there is no good dictionary to be had; but there is nobody here but slaves and princes. The slaves can't have their children instructed, and the nobility that choose to have theirs send them into foreign countries. There is not one school to be found in the whole city.

I am your dutiful son,

J. Q. ADAMS.

## JOHN ADAMS TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

MY CHILD,

YOURS of 20-31 March I have received.

I am well pleased with your learning German, for many reasons, and principally because I am told that science and literature flourish more at present in Germany than any where. A variety of languages will do no harm unless you should get a habit of attending more to words than things.

/ But, my dear boy, above all things, preserve your innocence and a pure conscience. Your morals are of more importance, both to yourself and the world, than all languages and all sciences. The least stain upon your character will do more harm to your happiness than all accomplishments will do it good. / I give you joy of the safe arrival of your brother, and the acknowledgment of the independence of your country in Holland.

Adieu.

J. ADAMS.

## JOHN ADAMS TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Hotel des Etats Unis á la Haye, 13 May, 1782.

MY DEAR SON,

I HAVE the pleasure to inform you that yesterday I removed into this house, and am now employed in setting it in order. You will see by the Gazettes that I have been received in character; that I have laid before the States a plan of a treaty which they have now under consideration, and which, I suppose, will be soon finished.

The bearer of this, Colonel Valentin, will deliver it. Perhaps he may be serviceable to you. I am, however, very uneasy on your account. I want you with me. Mr. Thaxter will probably leave me soon, and I shall be alone. I want you to pursue your studies, too, at Leyden. Upon the whole, I wish you would embark in a neutral vessel and come to me. If there should be a treaty to send, Mr. Thaxter perhaps will carry it.

Your studies, I doubt not, you pursue, because I know you to be a studious youth; but, above all, preserve a sacred regard to your own honor and reputation. Your morals are worth all the

sciences. Your conscience is the minister plenipotentiary of God Almighty in your breast. See to it that this minister never negotiates in vain. Attend to him in opposition to all the courts in the world. So charges your affectionate father,

J. ADAMS.

## No. II.

### CONTAINING ELEVEN LETTERS ON THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE,

ADDRESSED TO HIS SON, BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

In the year 1809, Mr. Adams was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to the court of St. Petersburg. He accordingly embarked from Boston on the 5th of August of that year, taking with him of his family, his wife and the youngest of three sons. The other two were left at home under the care of their grandparents, until the year 1815, when they rejoined their parents, then transferred to London. During the interval Mr. Adams kept up his correspondence with them, and as far as he could, endeavored to exercise a beneficial influence over their minds. The letters now published form one of the results of his labors of that period. Though addressed in form to his eldest son, who was then ten years old, they were designed for the use of all his children. None of these survived him with the single exception of the editor of this volume, by whom they are now presented to the attention of all young persons in the United States, in the hope that they may be found useful in stimulating their desire to make themselves familiar with the invaluable treasures of the sacred volume.

## LETTER I.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS — QUINCY.

St. Petersburg, 1 – 8 September, 1811.

MY DEAR SON,

IN your letter of 18 January to your mother you mentioned that you read to your Aunt Cranch a chapter in the Bible, or a section of Dr. Doddridge's annotations, every evening. This information



gave me great pleasure, for so great is my veneration for the Bible, and so strong my belief, that when duly read and meditated upon, it is of all the books in the world that which contributes most to make men good, wise and happy, that the earlier my children begin to read it, and the more steadily they pursue the practice of reading it throughout their lives, the more lively and confident will be my hopes, that they will prove useful citizens to their country, respectable members of society, and a real blessing to their parents.

But I hope that you have now arrived at an age to understand that reading, even of the Bible, is a thing in itself neither good nor bad, but that all the good that can be drawn from it, is by the use and improvement of what you have read, with the help of your own reflections. Young people sometimes boast of how many books and how much they have read; when instead of boasting, they ought to be ashamed of having wasted so much time to so little profit. I advise you, my son, in whatsoever you read, and most of all in reading the Bible, to remember that it is for the purpose of making you wiser and more virtuous.

I have myself for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year. I have always endeavoured to read it with the same spirit and temper of mind which I now recommend to you. That is, with the intention and desire that it may contribute to my advancement in wisdom and virtue. My desire is indeed very imperfectly successful, for like you, and like the Apostle Paul, I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind. But as I know that it is my nature to be imperfect, so I know it is my duty to aim at perfection; and feeling and deploring my own frailties, I can only pray Almighty God, for the aid of his spirit to strengthen my good desires and to subdue my propensities to evil. For it is from him that every good and every perfect gift descends.

My custom is to read four or five chapters of the Bible every morning immediately after rising from bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. But as other cares, duties and occupations engage the remainder of it, I have, perhaps, never devoted a sufficient portion of my hours to meditation upon what I have thus read. Even meditation itself is often fruitless unless it has some special object in view. Useful thoughts arise in the mind and pass away without being remembered or ever applied to any good purpose; like seed scattered upon the surface of the ground, which the birds devour, or the wind blows away, or which rots without taking root, however good the soil may be upon which it is cast.

We are all, my dear George, unwilling to confess our own infirmities, even to ourselves ; and when our own consciences are too honest to conceal them from us, our self-love is always busy either in attempting to disguise them to us, under false and delusive colors, or in seeking out excuses and apologies to reconcile them to our own minds. Thus, although I am always sensible that I have not derived from my assiduous perusal of the Bible (and I might apply the same remark to almost every thing else that I do) all the benefit that I might and ought, I am as constantly endeavouring to persuade myself that it is not my own fault. Sometimes I say to myself, I do not understand what I have read — I cannot help it. I did not make my own understanding. There are many things in the Bible hard to be understood, as St. Peter expressly says of Paul's Epistles. Some are hard in the Hebrew and Greek, the original languages in which the Scriptures were written. Some are harder still in the translations. I have been obliged to lead a wandering life about the world, and scarcely ever have at hand the books which might help me to surmount the difficulties. Conscience sometimes asks the question, whether my not understanding many passages is not owing to my want of attention in reading them? I must admit that it is ; a full proof of which is, that every time that I read the book through, I do understand some passages which I never understood before, and which I should have understood at a former reading had it been effected with a sufficient degree of attention. Then in answer to myself I say, It is true ; but I cannot always command at all my own attention, and never can to the degree that I should wish. My mind is oftentimes so full of other things — absorbed in bodily pain, or engrossed by passions, or distracted by pleasures, or exhausted by dissipation, that I cannot give to my proper daily employment the attention that I gladly would, and that is absolutely necessary to make it “fruitful of good works.” This acknowledgment of my weakness is just. But for how much of it I am still accountable to myself and to God, I hardly dare acknowledge to myself. Is it bodily pain? — How often was that brought upon me by my own imprudence and folly? Was it passion? — Heaven has given to every human being the *power* of controlling his passions, and if he neglects or uses it, the fault is his own, and he must be answerable for it. Was it pleasure? — Why did I indulge in it? Was it dissipation? — This is the most inexcusable of all ; for it must have been occasioned by my own thoughtlessness or irresolution.

It is of no use to discover our own faults and infirmities, unless the discovery prompts us to amendment. I have thought that if, in



addition to the daily hour which I give to the reading of the Bible, I should also, from time to time, and especially on Sundays, apply another occasional hour to communicate to you the reflections which arise in my mind upon its perusal, it might not only tend to fix and promote my own attention to the excellent instructions of that book, but perhaps also your advancement in its knowledge and wisdom. At your age it is probable that you have still greater difficulties to understand all that you read in the Bible, than I have at mine; and if you have as much self-observation as your letters show, you will be sensible of as much want of attention, both voluntary and involuntary, as I have acknowledged in myself. I intend, therefore, for the purpose of contributing to your improvement and my own, to write you several letters, in due time to follow this, and in which I shall endeavour to show you how you may derive the most advantage to yourself, from the perusal of the Scriptures. It is probable that when you receive the letters, you will not, on first reading them, entirely understand them. If that should be the case, ask your grandparents, or your uncle or aunt, to explain them to you; and if you still find them too hard, put them upon file, and lay them by two or three years, after which, read them again, and you will find them easy enough.

It is essential, my son, in order that you may go through this life with comfort to yourself and usefulness to your fellow-creatures, that you should form and adopt certain rules or principles for the government of your own conduct and temper. Unless you have such rules and principles, there will be numberless occasions on which you will have no guide for your government but your passions. In your infancy and youth, you have been, and will be for some years, under the authority and control of your friends and instructors, but you must soon come to the age when you must govern yourself. You have already come to that age in many respects. You know the difference between right and wrong. You know some of your duties, and the obligation you are under of becoming acquainted with them all. It is in the Bible that you must learn them, and from the Bible how to practise them.

Those duties are — to *God*, — to your *fellow-creatures*, — and to *yourself*. “~~Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.~~” (Luke x. 27.) “On these two commandments,” (Jesus Christ expressly says) “hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. xxii. 40.) That is to say, that the whole purpose of divine revelation is to inculcate them efficaciously upon the minds of men.

You will perceive that I have spoken of duties *to yourself*, dis-



tinged from those to God and to your fellow-creatures ; while Jesus Christ speaks of only *two* commandments. The reason is, because Christ and the commandment repeated by him consider *self-love* as so implanted in the heart of every man by the law of his nature, that it required no other commandment to establish its influence over the heart. And so great do they know its power to be, that they demand no other measure for the love of our neighbor, than that which they know we shall have for ourselves. But from the love of God, and the love of our neighbor, result *duties* to ourselves as well as to them, and they are all to be learnt in equal perfection by searching the Scriptures.

Let us then search the Scriptures. And in order to pursue our inquiries with methodical order, let us consider the various sources of instruction that we may draw from in this study. The Bible contains the Revelation of the Will of God ; it contains the history of the creation of the world and of mankind, and afterwards the history of one peculiar nation — ~~certainly the most extraordinary nation that has ever appeared upon earth.~~ It contains a system of religion and of morality, which we may examine upon its own merits, independent of the sanction it receives from being the Word of God ; and it contains a numerous collection of books, written at different ages of the world, by different authors, which we may survey as curious monuments of antiquity, and as literary compositions. In what light soever we regard it, whether with reference to revelation, to history, to morality, or to literature, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue.

I shall number separately these letters that I mean to write you on the subject of the Bible. And as after they are finished, I shall perhaps ask you to read them all together, or to look over them again myself, you must keep them on a separate file. I wish that hereafter they may be useful to your brothers and sister, as well as to you. As you will receive every one of them as a token of my affection for you during my absence, I pray that they may all be worthy of being read by them all with benefit to themselves, if it please God that they may live to be able to understand them.

From your affectionate Father.

A.

## LETTER II.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 15 September, 1811.

THE first point of view in which I have invited you to consider the Bible, is in the light of a *Divine Revelation*. And what are we to understand by these terms? I intend, as much as possible, to avoid the field of controversy, with which I am not well acquainted, and for which I have little respect and still less inclination. My idea of the Bible, as a *Divine Revelation*, is founded upon its practical use to mankind, and not upon metaphysical subtleties.

There are three points of doctrine, the belief of which forms the foundation of all human morality. The first is the existence of God; the second is the immortality of the human soul; and the third is a future state of rewards and punishments. Suppose it possible for a man to disbelieve either of these three articles of faith, and that man will have no conscience. He will have no other law than that of the tiger and the shark. The laws of man may bind him in chains, or may put him to death, but they never can make him wise, virtuous, or happy. It is possible to believe them all, without believing that the Bible is a *Divine Revelation*. It is so obvious to every reasonable being, that he did not make himself, and that the world which he sees could as little make itself, that the moment we begin to exercise the power of reflection, it seems impossible to escape the conviction that there is a Creator. It is equally evident that this Creator must be a spiritual and not a material Being. There is also a consciousness that the thinking part of our nature is not material, but spiritual — that it is not subject to the laws of matter, and, therefore, not perishable with it. Hence arises the belief that we possess an immortal soul. Pursuing the train of thought which the visible creation and observation upon ourselves suggests, we must soon discover that the Creator must also be the Governor of the Universe; that His power, His wisdom, and His goodness must be without bounds — that he is a righteous God, and loves righteousness — that mankind are bound by his laws of righteousness, and accountable to him for their obedience to them; and that as he does not always reward or punish them in this life, according to their good or evil deeds, the completion of divine justice must be reserved for another life.

The existence of a Creator, the immortality of the human soul, and the future state of retribution, are therefore so perfectly congenial to natural reason when once discovered, or rather it is so impossible to natural reason to disbelieve them, that it would seem the light of natural reason would alone suffice for their discovery. But this conclusion would not be exact. Human reason may be sufficient to get an obscure glimpse of these sacred and important truths, but it cannot discover them in all their clearness. For example — In all the numberless false religions which have swayed the minds of men in different regions and ages of the world, the idea of a *God* has always been included.

“Father of all — in every age,  
In every clime adored  
By saint, by savage and by sage,  
Jehovah — Jove — or Lord.”

So says Pope's universal prayer. But it is the *God* of the Hebrews alone, it is the God revealed to us in the Bible alone, who is announced as the *Creator of the world*. The ideas of God entertained by all the most illustrious and most ingenious nations of antiquity, were weak and absurd. The Persians worshipped the Sun. The Egyptians believed in an innumerable multitude of gods, and worshipped not only oxen, crocodiles, dogs and cats, but even garlicks and onions. The Greeks invented a poetical religion and adored men and women, virtues and vices, air, water, fire, and every thing that a vivid imagination could personify. Almost all the Greek philosophers reasoned and meditated upon the nature of *the gods*, but scarcely any of them ever reflected enough even to imagine that there was but one God, and not one of them ever conceived of him as the Creator of the world. Cicero has collected together all their opinions upon the nature of the gods, and pronounces that they are more like the dreams of madmen, than the sober judgments of wise men.

In the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* there is an account of the change of chaos into the world. Before the sea and the earth and the sky that surrounds all things (says Ovid) there was a thing called *chaos*, and some one of the gods, *he does not know which*, separated from one another the elements of this chaos, and turned them into a world. Thus far and no farther could human reason extend. But the first words of the Bible are “In the beginning, *God created* the Heaven and the Earth.” This blessed and sublime idea of God, the creator of the universe — this source of all human virtue and all human happiness, for which all the



sages and philosophers of Greece and Rome groped in darkness and never found, is *revealed* in the first verse of the Book of Genesis.

I call it the source of all human virtue and happiness, because when we have once attained the conception of a being, who by the mere act of his will *created* the world, it would follow as an irresistible consequence even if we were not so expressly told, that the same being must also be the *Governor* of his own creation. That man, with all other things, was also created by him and must hold his felicity and his virtue on the condition of obedience to His will. In the first chapters of the Bible, there is a short and rapid historical narrative of the manner in which the world and man were made; of the condition upon which happiness and immortality were bestowed upon our first parents; of their transgression of this condition, and of the punishment denounced upon them, and the promise of redemption from it by "*the seed of the woman.*"

There are and always have been, where the holy scriptures have been known, petty wittlings and self-conceited reasoners who cavil at some of the particular details of this narrative. Even serious inquirers after truth have sometimes been perplexed to believe that there should have been evening and morning before the existence of the sun; that a man should be made of clay and a woman from the rib of a man; that they should be forbidden to eat an apple, and for disobedience to that injunction, be with all their posterity doomed to death; that a serpent should speak, and beguile a woman; and that eating an apple could give the knowledge of good and evil. All this is undoubtedly marvellous, and above our comprehension. Much of it is figurative and allegorical; nor is it easy to distinguish, what part of it is to be understood in a literal, and what in a symbolical sense. But that which it imports us to understand is plain. The great and essential principles upon which our duties and enjoyments depend are involved in no obscurity — A God, the creator and governor of the universe, is revealed in all his majesty and power. The terms upon which he gave existence and happiness to the common parent of mankind are exposed to us in the clearest light. *Disobedience to the will of God*, was the offence for which he was precipitated from Paradise. *Obedience to the will of God* is the merit by which Paradise is to be regained.

Here, then, is the foundation of all morality; the source of all our obligations as accountable creatures. This idea of the transcendent power of the Supreme Being is essentially connected with that by which the whole duty of man is summed up in obedience to his will. I have observed that natural reason might suffice for an obscure perception, but not for the clear discovery of

these truths. Even Cicero could start to his own mind the question whether justice could exist upon earth, unless founded upon piety, but could not settle it to his own satisfaction. “*Haud scio,*” says he, “*an pietate adversus deos sublata, fides etiam et societas humani generis et una excellentissima virtus, justitia tollatur.*” The ray of divine light contained in the principle that justice has no other foundation than piety, could make its way to the soul of the heathen, but there it was extinguished in the low, unsettled and inconsistent notions, which were the only foundations of his *piety*. How could his piety be *pure* or *sound* when he did not know whether there was one God or a thousand; whether he or they had or had not any concern in the formation of the world, and whether they had any regard to the affairs or the conduct of mankind? Once assume the idea of a single God, the Creator of all things, whose will is the law of moral obligation to man, and to whom man is accountable, and *piety* becomes as rational as it is essential. It becomes the first of human duties, and not a doubt can thenceforth remain, that fidelity and the association of human kind, and that most excellent virtue of justice, “repose upon no other foundation.”

At a later age than Cicero, Longinus expressly quotes the third verse of the first chapter of the book of Genesis as an example of the sublime — “And God said, let there be light, and there was light.” And wherein consists its sublimity? In the image of transcendent power presented to the mind with the most striking simplicity of expression. Yet this verse only exhibits one of the effects of that transcendent power which the first verse discloses in announcing God as the Creator of the world. The true sublimity is in the idea given us of God. To such a God piety is but a reasonable service. To such a God the heart of man must yield with cheerfulness the tribute of homage, which it never could pay to the bleating gods of Egypt, to the dissolute debauchees of the Grecian mythology, nor even to the more elevated, but no less fantastical, imaginations of the Grecian philosophers and sages.

I shall resume this subject in another letter. It is more than a month since we have received any letters from America.

From your father.

A.



## LETTER III.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 22 September, 1811.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

My last letter contained the substance, but not the form, of an argument for considering the Bible as a divine revelation. It explicitly stated the three points of belief which I deemed indispensable to the happiness, the virtue, and improvement of mankind. 1. The existence of one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, and particularly of mankind. 2. The immortality of the soul. 3. A future life of rewards and punishments. I showed you that the natural and ordinary powers of the human mind are not sufficient for the discovery of these truths ; that they are disclosed in the Bible by special and distinct revelations from God in a manner altogether different from the ordinary course of nature. And hence it follows that the Bible, considered as divine revelation, contains a series of direct communications from the Creator of mankind to individual persons, which have been by some of them committed to writing, and which include a code of moral and religious laws suitable for all mankind, and binding upon all who are blest with the knowledge of it.

But if the belief of these doctrines be essential to the happiness, virtue, and improvement of mankind, why were they particularly disclosed by revelation to a few individuals of a single nation? Why were they not made discoverable to all men by the simple operation of their reason? The answers to these questions are also to be found in the Bible. The first parents of mankind were created immortal, innocent, and happy. But they were created free. The tenure of their blessed state was on the condition of obedience to the will of God. This condition they violated. They forfeited by their transgression their immortality, their innocence, their happiness. With them they lost their posterity, who could be redeemed to their original state, only by the intervention of a Saviour. Among the miseries brought upon mankind by this apostasy of their ancestor, was the loss of the knowledge of the true God, and of their own immortality. This loss was not, however, total in any part of the world ; a remnant of it was everywhere preserved, but in different degrees among different nations.



It was the purpose of Divine Providence that it should never be wholly lost, and that in his due time it should be wholly restored. To a succession of patriarchs until Abraham, and afterwards to him and his descendants alone, until the appearance of Jesus Christ, God continued to communicate his will by special revelation. But even from them he reserved the clear and certain hope of a future life ; until Jesus Christ came with *glad tidings* of great joy to all mankind ; bringing life and immortality once more to light by the gospel.

To the three articles of faith, which I have supposed to be essential for all religion and morality, the Bible as a divine revelation adds therefore a fourth ; — the original excellent and present fallen condition of man. This tenet is peculiar to the religions founded upon the Bible, and it has great and numerous consequences upon the moral system of Christianity. An omnipotent Creator, an immortal soul, and a day of judgment, are sometimes considered as the foundation of natural religion, though, after all, independent of the Bible, they are mere speculations and conjectures, which men may believe or disbelieve, according to the strength or weakness of their minds. But the fall and redemption of man, with all the duties incumbent on us in consequence of them, are taught only in the Bible. Obscure and confused traditions preserved among the heathen world some memorial of this truth as well as of the others. In the mythology of the Greeks it was believed that men were originally made virtuous and happy, and had gradually become vicious and miserable. Hence their poetical fictions of the four ages of gold, silver, brass, and iron. But in these curious mixtures of forgotten history with inventive fancy there were no moral principles involved. They admitted the degeneracy of mankind, but they inculcated no precept for its restoration to its original purity. They lamented that Astrea had abandoned the earth, but they gave no hopes of her returning to it again.

By admitting the Bible as a divine revelation, we have hopes of future felicity inspired together with a conviction of our present wretchedness. The blood of the Redeemer has washed out the pollution of our original sin, and the certainty of eternal happiness in a future life is again secured to us on the primitive condition of obedience to the will of God.

By considering the Bible as divine revelation, we acknowledge the frequent miraculous interposition of Divine power. The reluctance at coming to this admission is to many persons of the present times the strongest objection to the authority of the sacred scriptures. Nature, it is true, operates by general laws, but those laws of which we have no knowledge but by inferences which we

draw from the observation of their effects, are themselves among the evidences of an omnipotent Creator, and it requires no great effort of the understanding to perceive that he whose power was competent to produce the general rule must also be possessed of the power of making every particular exception. The power to create being once admitted to exist, it would be arrant trifling to cavil about the modes of creating. A miracle is nothing more than a physical phenomenon, different from those which we are accustomed to observe; for if by a miracle, we understand merely something incomprehensible to our understanding, the growth of a spire of grass is as miraculous as any thing related in the Bible.

In receiving the Bible as a divine revelation, I do not consider every part of it, even in the original languages, as having been written by preternatural inspiration from Heaven. I do not suppose it necessary to consider the book as exempt from physical, geographical and chronological errors. The translations into modern languages, and the English translation still used, in particular abound with errors. The revelations themselves are of two kinds — those which were made to particular persons and for temporary purposes — and those which affected the destinies and duties of mankind for all ages.

The forms of revelation which divine wisdom assumed were so various and multiplied, that it would require a long dissertation and perhaps a large volume to enumerate and explain them. It is necessary here only to remark that from the creation until the death of Moses, God manifested himself to the Patriarchs sometimes in human shape, and sometimes by visions, by dreams, and by angels, and finally sometimes by voices which were heard in the air when there was nothing to be seen. The direct and personal intercourse from God to man, ceased from the time of Moses until that of Jesus Christ. In Deuteronomy, xxxiv. 10, it is expressly said, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the *Lord* knew face to face." It is the belief of the great majority of Christians, that in the person of Jesus Christ, God himself again appeared in human form; that he took upon himself the nature of man, to teach mankind his most perfect law, and to redeem them from the curse of death by submitting to it himself. This however has become a subject of great controversy among Christians themselves. I have read very little of the numberless volumes which have been written on both sides of this question. But I have endeavoured by assiduous attention to the New Testament, to settle my own opinion concerning it. There are so many passages, both in the Gospels and the Epistles, which countenance the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ and so many



which appear incompatible with it, that to my judgment it is not among the things clearly revealed. I know not how to order my speech by reason of darkness, and I therefore conclude it is one of those mysteries, not to be unfolded to me during this present life.

But whether Jesus Christ was a manifestation of Almighty God in the form of a man, or whether he was but the only begotten Son of God, by whom he made the world, and by whom he will judge the world in righteousness, I consider as merely a speculative question, which I am not called upon to settle, and about which my only duty is not to suffer my passions or prejudices to be engaged on either side. That he came into the world to preach repentance and remission of sins, to proclaim glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to man; and finally to bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel; all this is equally clear, if we consider the Bible as divine revelation; and all this it imports infinitely our conduct in this world and our happiness in the next to know. The rest may be left to a brighter state of existence to ascertain.

Let us now conclude, my dear son, by resuming the duties to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves, which are derived as immediate consequences from the admission of the Bible as divine revelation. 1. Piety. From the first chapter of the Old Testament to the last of the New, obedience to the will of God is inculcated as including the whole duty of man. 2. Benevolence. The love of our neighbors was forcibly taught in the Old Testament, but to teach it more effectually was the special object of Christ's mission upon earth. "Love," says St. Paul, (Romans xiii. 10,) "is the fulfilling of the Law." But Christ, in his discourse to the Apostles at the last supper, says, "A NEW commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." 3. Humility. The profound sense of our infirmities which must follow from the doctrine of original sin, and of its punishment inflicted upon all human kind, necessarily inspires meekness and lowliness of spirit. These two are commanded in express terms by Jesus Christ, and as principles of morality, they are not only different from the maxims of every other known system of ethics, but in direct opposition to them. I shall, perhaps, on some future occasion, undertake to show you a comparative estimate of these three cardinal virtues of Christianity with the four cardinal virtues of the heathen philosophers, which were, justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude; every one of them entitled to the epithet which Cicero gives to the first, of



“una excellentissima virtus,” but which, as forming the measure of human duties, can only serve to show forth in brighter evidence the unrivalled superiority of the moral code of the Bible.

From your affectionate father.  
A.

#### LETTER IV.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 29 September, 1811.

MY DEAR SON,

THE second general point of view in which I propose to you to consider the Bible, to the great end that it may “thoroughly furnish you unto all good works,” is in its *historical* character. To a man of liberal education the study of History is not only useful and important, but altogether indispensable, and with regard to the history contained in the Bible, the observation which Cicero makes respecting that of his own country is much more emphatically applicable; that it is not so much praiseworthy to be acquainted with it, as it is shameful to be ignorant of it.

History, so far as it relates to the actions and adventures of men, may be divided into five different classes: — 1. The history of the world, otherwise called universal history. 2. That of particular nations. 3. That of particular institutions. 4. That of single families. And 5. That of individual men. The two last of these classes are generally distinguished by the name of memoirs and of biography.

All these classes of History are to be found in the Bible, and it may be worth your while to discriminate them from one another. 1. The Universal History is short, and all contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, together with the first chapter of the first book of Chronicles, which is little more than a genealogical list of names. But it is of the highest importance, not only as it includes the history of the Creation, and of the fall of man, of the antediluvian world, and of the flood by which the whole human race, excepting Noah and his family, were destroyed, but as it gives a very precise chronological account of the *time* from the Creation until the birth of Abraham. This is the foundation of all ancient history, and in reading the profane historians hereafter, I would advise you always to reflect upon their narrations with reference to it. With respect to the chronology, a correct idea of this is so necessary to understand all history, ancient and modern, that I may hereafter

write you something further concerning it. For the present I shall only recommend to your particular attention the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis, and request you to cast up and write me the amount of the world's age, when Abraham was born. 2. The remainder of the book of Genesis, beginning at the twelfth chapter, is a history of one individual, (Abraham,) and of his family during three generations of his descendants. After which the book of Exodus commences with the history of the same family multiplied into a nation. This national and family history is continued through the books of the Old Testament, until that of *Job*, which is of a peculiar character, differing in many particulars from every other part of the scriptures.

There is no other history extant, which can give so interesting and correct a view of the rise and progress of human associations, as this account of Abraham and his descendants through all the vicissitudes to which individuals, families, and nations are liable. There is no other history where the origin of a whole nation is traced up to a single man, and where a connected chain of events, and a regular series of persons from generation to generation is preserved. As the history of a family, it is intimately connected with our religious principles and opinions, for it is the family from which Jesus Christ in his human character descended. It begins by relating the command of God to Abraham to abandon his *country*, his *kindred* and his *father's house*, and to go to a land which he would show him. This command was accompanied by two promises, from which and from their fulfilment arose the differences which I have just noticed, between the history of the Jews and that of every other nation. The first of these promises was that God would make of Abram a great nation, and bless him. The second, and incomparably the most important, was that in him (Abram) *all families of the earth should be blessed*. This promise was made about two thousand years before the birth of Christ, and in him it had its fulfilment. When Abram, in obedience to the command of God had gone into the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared to him and made him a third promise, which was that he would give that land to the nation which should descend from him, as a possession. This was fulfilled between five and six hundred years afterwards. In reading all the historical books both of the Old and New Testament, as well as the books of the Prophets, you should always bear in mind the reference which they have to these three promises of God to Abram. All the history is no more than a narrative of the particular manner and the detail of events with which those promises were fulfilled.

In the account of the Creation, and the fall of man, I have already



remarked that the moral doctrine inculcated by the Bible, is that the great consummation of all human virtue consists in *obedience to the will of God*. When we come hereafter to speak of the Bible in its *ethical* character, I shall endeavour to show you the intrinsic excellence of this principle, but I shall now only remark how strongly the principle itself is illustrated, first by the account of the fall, and next by the history of Abraham.

In the account of the Creation, we are informed, that God, after having made the world, created the first human pair and gave them dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth ; and also gave them every herb bearing seed, and the fruit of every tree for meat. And all this we are told God saw was *very good*. Thus the immediate possession of every thing good, was given them, and its perpetual enjoyment ensured to their descendants, on the sole condition of abstaining from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *good and evil*.

It is altogether immaterial to my present remarks whether this narrative is to be understood in an allegorical or a literal sense. As not only the knowledge but the possession of all created good was granted, the Fruit of the Tree could confer upon them no new knowledge, but that of evil, and the command was nothing more than to abstain from the knowledge of evil, to forbear from rushing upon their own destruction. It is not sufficient to say, that this was a command in its own nature light and easy. It was a command to pursue the only law of their nature — to keep the happiness which had been heaped without measure upon them. But observe, it contained the *principle of obedience*. It was assigned to them as a *duty*, and the heaviest of penalties was denounced upon its transgression. They were not to discuss the wisdom or justice of this command — they were not to inquire why it had been enjoined upon them, nor could they have the slightest possible motive for such an inquiry. Unqualified felicity and immortality was already theirs : wretchedness and death were alone forbidden them, but placed within their reach merely as a trial of their *obedience*. They violated the law ; they forfeited their joy and immortality ; they “brought into the world death and all our woe.”

Here then is one extreme case in which the mere principle of obedience could be tried. A command to abstain from that from which every motive of reason and every interest would have deterred, had the command never been given. A command given in the easiest of all possible forms, requiring not so much as action of any kind, but merely forbearance. And as its transgression was so severely punished, the only inference we can draw from it is that



the most aggravated of all crimes and that which includes in itself all others is *disobedience* to the will of God.

Let us now consider how the same principle of obedience is inculcated in the history of Abraham, by a case in the opposite extreme. God commanded Abram to abandon forever his *country*, his *kindred* and his *father's house*, to go he knew not where, promising, as a reward of his obedience, to bless him and his posterity, though he was then childless. He was required to renounce every thing that could most contribute to the happiness and comfort of his life and which was in his actual enjoyment; to become a houseless, friendless wanderer upon earth, on the mere faith of the promises that a land should be shown him which his descendants should possess; that they should be a great nation and that through them, all mankind should receive in future ages a further blessing. The obedience required of Adam was merely to retain all the blessings that he enjoyed. The obedience required of Abraham was to sacrifice all those that he possessed for the vague and distant prospect of a future compensation, to his posterity. The self-control and self-denial required of Adam was in itself the slightest that imagination can conceive, but its failure was punished by the forfeiture of all his enjoyments. The self-dominion to be exercised by Abraham was of the severest and most painful kind, but its accomplishment will ultimately be rewarded by the restoration of all that was forfeited by Adam. But this restoration was to be obtained by no ordinary proof of *obedience*. The sacrifice of mere personal blessings, however great, could not lay the foundation for the redemption of mankind from death. The voluntary submission of Jesus Christ to his own death, in the most excruciating and ignominious form, was to consummate the great plan of redemption, but the submission of Abraham to sacrifice his beloved and only son, the child promised by God himself, and through whom all the greater promises were to be carried into effect, the feelings of nature, the voice of humanity, the parent's bowels were all required to be sacrificed by Abraham, to the blind unquestioning principle of obedience to the will of God. The blood of Isaac was not indeed shed. The butchery of an only son by the hand of his Father was a sacrifice which a merciful God did not require to be completely executed. But as an instance of obedience it was imposed upon Abraham, and nothing less than the voice of an angel from God, could arrest his uplifted arm, and withhold him from sheathing the knife in the heart of his child. It was upon this testimonial of obedience, that God's promise of redemption was expressly renewed to Abraham: — "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, BECAUSE thou hast OBEYED my voice." Genesis xxii. 18.

I have not done with this subject, and intend to pursue it in my next letter.

From your Father.

A.

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## LETTER V.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 6 October, 1811.

WE were considering the Bible in its historical character, and as the history of a family. From the moment when the universal history finishes, that of Abraham begins; and thenceforward it is the history of a family, of which Abraham is the first and Jesus Christ the last person. And from the first appearance of Abraham, the whole history appears to have been ordered from age to age expressly to prepare for the appearance of Christ upon earth. The history begins by the first and mildest trial of Abraham's obedience, and the promise, as a reward of his fidelity, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. The second trial, that which required the sacrifice of his son, was many years afterwards, and the promise was then more explicit, and more precisely assigned as the reward of his obedience. There were between these periods two intermediate occasions recorded in the fifteenth and eighteenth chapters of Genesis, in the first of which the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a *vision*, and promised him that he should have a child from whom a great and mighty nation should proceed, which, after being in servitude four hundred years in a strange land, should become possessors of the land of Canaan, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. On the second the Lord appeared to him and to his wife Sarah, repeated the promise that they should have a child, that Abraham should surely become a great and mighty nation, and that "all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him." "For I know him, (said the Lord,) that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do *justice and judgment*, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." From all which it appears obvious that the first of these promises was made as subservient and instrumental to the second, that the great and mighty nation was to be raised, as the means, in the ways of God's providence, for



producing the sacred person of Jesus Christ, through whom the perfect sacrifice of atonement for the original transgression of man should be consummated, by which all the families of the earth should be blessed.

I am so little versed in controversial divinity, that I know not whether this eighteenth chapter of Genesis has ever been adduced as an argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity. There is at least in it an alternation of three divine persons and of one, not a little remarkable, and which I know not how to explain. If taken in connection with the nineteenth chapter it would seem that one of the three men entertained by Abraham was God himself, and that the other two were angels sent by God to destroy Sodom. Leaving this, however, let me ask your particular attention to the reason assigned by God for bestowing such extraordinary blessings upon Abraham. It unfolds to us the first and most important part of the superstructure of moral principles erected upon the foundation of *obedience to the will of God*. The rigorous trials of Abraham's obedience, mentioned in this and my last letter were only tests to ascertain his character in reference to the single, and I may say abstract, point of obedience. Here we have a precious gleam of light, disclosing what the nature of this will of God was, that he should command his children and his household after him, by which the parental authority to instruct and direct his descendants in the way of the Lord, was given him as an authority and enjoined upon him as a duty; and the lessons which he was thus empowered and required to teach his posterity were to do *justice and judgment*. Thus as *obedience to the will of God is the first and all comprehensive virtue taught in the Bible, so the second is justice and judgment towards mankind*, and this is exhibited as the result naturally flowing from the other. In this same chapter, too, is related the intercession of Abraham with God for the preservation of Sodom from destruction. The city was destroyed for its crimes, but the Lord promised Abraham that the whole city should be spared if in it only ten righteous men should be found. The principle of mercy was therefore sanctioned in immediate connection with that of justice.

Abraham had several children, but the great promises of God were to be performed through Isaac alone, and of the two sons of Isaac, Jacob, the youngest only, was selected for the foundation of the sacred family and nation. It was from Jacob that the multiplication of the family began, and his twelve sons were all included in the genealogy of the tribes which afterwards constituted the Jewish people. Ishmael, the children of Abraham by Keturah, and Esau, the eldest son of Isaac, were all the parents of considerable families,



which afterwards spread into nations; but they formed no part of the chosen people, and their history, as well as that of other neighboring nations, is only incidentally noticed in the Bible so far as they had relations of intercourse or of hostility with the people of God.

The history of Abraham and his descendants, to the close of the book of Genesis, is a biography of individuals. The incidents related of them are all of the class belonging to private and domestic life. Joseph, indeed, became a highly distinguished public character in the land of Egypt, and it was through him that his father and all his brothers were finally settled there; which was necessary to prepare the existence of their posterity as a nation, and to fulfil the purpose which God had announced to Abraham, that they should be four hundred years dwelling in a strange land. In the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, many miraculous events are recorded, but all those which are spoken of as having happened in the ordinary course of human affairs have an air of reality about them which no invention could imitate. In some of the transactions related, the conduct of the patriarchs is highly blamable: circumstances of deep depravity are particularly told of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, upon which it is necessary to remark that these actions are never spoken of with approbation, but always with strong marks of censure, and generally with a minute account of the punishment which followed upon the transgression. The vices and crimes of the patriarchs are sometimes alleged as objections against the belief that persons guilty of them should ever have been specially favored by God; but, vicious as they were, there is every reason to be convinced that they were less so than their contemporaries. Their vices appear to us at this day gross, disgusting, and atrocious; but the written law was not then given; the boundaries between right and wrong were not defined with the same precision as in the tables given afterwards to Moses. The law of nature was the only guide of morality by which they could be governed and the sins of intemperance of every kind recorded in holy writ were at that period less aggravated than they would have been in after ages, because they were in a great measure sins of ignorance.

From the time when the sons of Jacob were settled in Egypt, until the completion of the four hundred years during which God had foretold to Abraham that his family should dwell there, there is a chasm in the sacred history. We are expressly told that "all the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were three-score and ten: Genesis xlvi. 26, and Exodus i. 5. It is then said, that Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

After which nothing further is related of their posterity than that they were fruitful, and increased abundantly ; and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty ; and the land was filled with them until “ there arose up a new king, which knew not Joseph.” On his first settlement in Egypt Jacob had obtained the grant from Pharaoh of the land of Goshen, a place peculiarly suited to the pasturage of flocks. Jacob and his sons were *shepherds*, and this circumstance was in the first instance the occasion upon which that separate spot was assigned to them, and secondarily was the means provided by God, for keeping distinct and separate two nations thus residing together.

~~Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians, — and the Israelites were shepherds.~~ Although dwelling in the land of Egypt, therefore, the Israelites were sojourners and strangers, and by a mutual antipathy towards one another, originating in their respective conditions of life, they were prevented from intermixing together by marriage, and losing their distinctive characters. This was the cause which had been reserved by the Supreme Creator, during the space of three generations and more than four centuries, as the occasion for eventually bringing them out of the land. For in proportion as they multiplied, it had the tendency to excite the jealousies and fears of the Egyptian king, as actually happened. Those jealousies and fears suggested to the king of Egypt a policy of the most intolerable oppression, and the most execrable cruelty towards the children of Israel. Not content with reducing them to the most degraded condition of servitude, and making their lives bitter with hard bondage, he conceived the project of destroying the whole race of them by ordering all the male children to be murdered immediately after they were born. In the wisdom of Providence this very command was the means of preparing the family, thus multiplied into a nation, for their issue from Egypt, and for their conquest of the land which had been promised to their ancestor Abraham, and it was at the same time the immediate occasion of raising up the great warrior, legislator, and prophet, who was to be their deliverer and leader. Henceforth they are to be considered as a people, and their history as that of a nation.

During a period of more than a thousand years, the Bible gives us a particular account of their destinies. An outline of their constitution, civil, ecclesiastical and military, with the code of laws prescribed to them by the Deity, is contained in the books of Moses, and will afford us copious materials for future meditation. Their subsequent revolutions of government, under Joshua : fifteen successive chiefs denominated Judges, and a succession of kings, until they were first dismembered into two separate kingdoms, and after a lapse of some centuries both conquered by the Assyrians and the



Babylonians, but at the end of seventy years, partially restored to their country and their Temple, constitute the remaining historical books of the Old Testament. Every part of them is full of instruction. But my present purpose is only to point your attention to their *general* historical character. My next letter will contain a few remarks on the Bible, as containing a system of *morals*.

In the mean time I remain your affectionate father.

A.

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## LETTER VI.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 10 January, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

IN the promise with which my last letter to you upon the Bible was concluded, that I should next consider the Scriptures in their ethical character, as containing a system of morals, I undertook a task from the performance of which I have been hitherto deterred by its very magnitude and importance. The more I reflected upon the subject, the more sensibly did I feel my own incompetency to do it justice, and by a weakness too common in the world, from the apprehension of inability to accomplish so much as I ought, I have hitherto been withheld from the attempt to accomplish any thing at all. Thus more than a year has elapsed, leaving me still burthened with the load of my promise, and in now undertaking to discharge it I must premise that you are to expect only the desultory and undigested thoughts, which I have not the means of combining into a regular and systematic work.

I shall not entangle myself in the controversy, which has sometimes been discussed with a temper not very congenial either to the nature of the question itself, or to the undoubted principles of Christianity, whether the Bible, like all other systems of morals, lays the ultimate basis of all human duties in self-love; or whether it enjoins duties on the principle of perfect and disinterested benevolence. Whatsoever obligation is sanctioned by a promise of reward or a menace of punishment, the ultimate motive for its fulfilment may justly be attributed to selfish considerations. But if *obedience to the will of God* be the universal and only foundation of all moral duty, special injunctions may be binding upon the consciences of men, although their performance should not be secured either by the impulse of hope or of fear.



The Law given from Sinai was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code. It contained many statutes adapted only to that time and to the particular circumstances of the nation to whom it was given. They could of course be binding only upon them and only until abrogated by the same authority which enacted them, as they afterwards were by the Christian dispensation. But many others were of universal application : laws essential to the existence of men in society and most of which have been enacted by every nation which ever possessed any code of laws. But as the Levitical Law was given by God himself it extended to a great variety of objects of infinite importance to the welfare of men, but which could not come within the reach of merely human legislation. It combined the temporal and spiritual authorities together, and regulated not only the actions but the passions of those to whom it was given. Human legislators can undertake only to prescribe the *actions* of men. They acknowledge their inability to govern or direct the sentiments of the heart. The very definition of law styles it a rule of civil *conduct*, not of internal principle and there is no crime in the power of men to perpetrate, which an individual may not project, design, and fully intend, without incurring guilt in the eye of human law. It was one of the greatest marks of the Divine favor bestowed upon the children of Israel, that their Legislator gave them rules not only of action but for the government of the heart.

There were occasionally a few short, sententious principles of morality issued from the Oracles of Greece. Among them and undoubtedly the most excellent of them was that of self-knowledge (*γνῶθι σεαυτόν*) which one of the purest moralists and finest poets of Rome expressly says came from Heaven. But if you would remark the distinguishing characteristics between true and false religion, compare the manner in which the ten commandments were proclaimed by the voice of Almighty God, from Mount Sinai, with thunder, lightning, and an earthquake, by the sound of a Trumpet, and in the hearing of six hundred thousand souls, with the studied secresy, and mystery, and mummary with which the Delphian and other oracles of the Grecian gods were delivered. The miraculous interpositions of Divine power, recorded in every part of the Bible, are invariably marked with a grandeur and sublimity worthy of the Creator of the world and before which the gods of Homer, not excepting his Jupiter, dwindle into the most contemptible of pigmies. But on no occasion was the manifestation of the Deity so solemn, so awful, so calculated to make indelible impressions upon the imagination and souls of the mortals to whom he revealed himself, as when he first appeared in the character of their Lawgiver. The

law thus dispensed was imperfect ; it was destined to be partly superseded and improved into absolute perfection, many ages afterwards, by the appearance of Jesus Christ upon earth ; but to judge of its excellence as a system of laws, it must be compared with the human codes which existed or were promulgated nearly at the same age of the world, and in other nations. Remember then that this law was given fourteen hundred and ninety years before Christ was born. At that time the Assyrian and Egyptian monarchies existed, but of their government and laws we know scarcely any thing, but what is to be collected from the Bible itself. Of the Phrygian, Lydian and Trojan States at the same period, little more is known. The President Goguet, in a very ingenious and elaborate work on the origin of laws, arts, and sciences among the ancient nations, says that the maxims, the civil and political laws of these people are absolutely unknown, that not even an idea of them can be formed, with the single exception of the Lydians, of whom Herodotus asserts that their laws were the same with those of the Greeks.

The same author contrasts the total darkness and oblivion into which all the institutions of these mighty empires have fallen, with the fulness and clearness and admirable composition of the Hebrew code, which has not only descended to us entire, but still constitutes the national code of the Jews, scattered as they are over the whole face of the earth, and still enters so largely into the legislation of almost every civilized nation upon the globe. He observes that these laws having been prescribed by God himself, the merely human laws of other cotemporary nations cannot bear any comparison with them ; but my motive in forming this comparison is to present it to your reflections as a proof, and to my mind a very strong proof of the reality of its Divine origin. For how is it that the whole system of government and administration, the municipal, political, ecclesiastical, military and moral laws and institutions which bound in society the numberless myriads of human beings, who formed for many successive ages, the stupendous monarchies of Africa and Asia, should have totally perished and been obliterated from the memory of mankind, while the laws of a paltry tribe of shepherds, characterized by Tacitus, and by the sneering infidelity of Gibbon, as “ the most despised portion of their slaves,” should not only have survived the wreck of all those empires, but remained to this day, rules of faith and practice to every enlightened nation of the world and perishable only with it ? The reason is obvious. It is their intrinsic excellence which has preserved them from the destruction which befalls all the works of mortal men. “ The precepts of the decalogue alone (says Goguet,) disclose more



sublime truths, more maxims essentially suited to form the happiness of men than all the writings of profane antiquity put together can furnish. The more you meditate upon the laws of Moses, the more striking and the brighter does their wisdom appear."

It would be a laborious but not an unprofitable investigation to reduce into a regular classification, like that of the Institutes of Justinian, or the Commentaries of Blackstone, the whole code of Moses, which embraces not only all the ordinary subjects of legislation together with principles of religion and morality, but laws of ecclesiastical, civil, and military discipline, regulations of police, and even directions concerning the minutest actions and the dress of individuals. This however would lead me too far from my present purpose, which is merely to consider the Bible as containing a system of morality. I shall therefore only notice those parts of the Law, which may be particularly referred to that class and at present must confine myself to a few remarks upon the Decalogue itself, which having been spoken by the voice, and twice written upon the stone tables by the finger of God, may be considered as the foundation of the whole system.

Of the ten commandments, emphatically so called, for the extraordinary and miraculous distinction with which they were promulgated, the first four are religious laws. The fifth and tenth are properly and peculiarly *moral*, and the other four are of the criminal department of municipal law. The unity of the Godhead, the prohibition of making graven images for worship, that of taking lightly or "in vain," as the English translation expresses it, the name of the Deity, and the injunction to observe the sabbath, as a day sanctified and set apart for his worship, were all intended to inculcate that reverence for the one only and true God, that profound and penetrating sentiment of *piety*, which in a former letter I urged as the great and only immovable foundation of all human virtue. Next to the duties towards the Creator, that of honoring the earthly parents is enjoined. It is to them that every individual owes the greatest obligations, and to them that he is consequently bound by the first and strongest of earthly ties. The following commands applying to the relation between man and all his fellow mortals, are all negative. As their application was universal to every human being it was not required that any positive act of beneficence towards them should be performed, but only to abstain from wronging them, either, — 1. in their persons — 2. in their property — 3. in their conjugal rights, and — 4. in their good name. After which all the essential enjoyments of life being thus guarded from voluntary injury; the tenth and closing commandment goes to the very source of all human action the heart, and positively forbids all



those *desires*, which first prompt and lead to every transgression upon the property, and rights of our fellow creatures.

Vain indeed would be the search among all the writings of profane antiquity ; not merely of that remote antiquity, but even in the most refined and most philosophical ages of Greece and Rome, to find so broad, so complete and so solid a basis for morality, as this decalogue lays down. Yet I have said it was imperfect. Its sanctions, its rewards, its punishments had reference only to the present life. And it had no injunction of positive beneficence towards *our neighbour*. Of these the Law was not entirely destitute in its other parts ; but both, in this respect, and in the other, it was to be perfected by him who brought life and immortality to light in the gospel.

Upon which subject you shall hear again from your affectionate Father.

A.

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## LETTER VII.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 7 March, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

IN considering the law of the Hebrews, as delivered by the Creator of the world to Moses, with reference only to its moral precepts, the character by which it is most strongly distinguished from all the other codes of ancient nations, of which we have any knowledge, is its *humanity*.

The cardinal virtues of the heathens were, temperance, prudence, *justice* and fortitude — three of which, however excellent, may be denominated selfish virtues, since they have a direct reference only to the happiness of the individual, and justice is the only measure which it requires to be extended to others. None of the lawgivers of antiquity had considered the nations for which they formed their institutions as a family of *brothers* ; nor do any of them appear to have issued any laws founded upon a general principle of benevolence and good will, independent of that which arose from particular relations of kindred, of friendship, or of hospitality.

In the 22d and 23d chapters of Exodus are the following precepts :

“Thou shalt neither vex a *stranger*, nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

“Ye shall not afflict any *widow* or *fatherless child*.”

“If thou lend money to any of my people that is *poor* by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer.”

“If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down.”

“If thou meet thine *enemy’s* ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.”

These positive precepts of kindness to the *stranger*, to the poor, to the *widow* and *orphan*, and even to *enemies*, are many times repeated and enjoined in different passages of the law. And of the same description are the following in the 19th chapter of Leviticus :

“Thou shalt not curse the *deaf*, nor put a stumbling-block before the *blind*, but shalt fear thy God.”

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother *in thine heart*, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.”

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

It is said by Plutarch (Langhorne’s Plutarch, i. 196) that the festival of the Saturnalia, which was a mere holiday to the slaves of Rome, was supposed by some to be a vestige of the equality which subsisted in the times of Saturn, the golden age, when there was neither servant nor master, but all were upon the same footing, and as it were of one family. Instead of one yearly day of licentious sports, the law of the Hebrews ordained that upon every fiftieth year the trumpet of the jubilee should sound and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof. (Leviticus xxv. 9.) Every Hebrew servant was restored, with all his family, to the full enjoyment of freedom at the end of seven years. These were more important vestiges of primitive equality and of real consanguinity, than the Roman Saturnalia. And they are congenial to the general spirit of the Mosaic law. The tendency of all its moral precepts was to generalize as much as possible the benevolent sentiment of family affection. As they were descended from a family of brothers, it is always in the character of a brother, or of a neighbour, that the duties of an Israelite to his countrymen was prescribed to him.

Solon (Langhorne’s Plutarch, i. 227) forbade the freedom of his city to be granted to any, but such as were forever exiled from their own country, or transplanted themselves to Athens with their whole family, for the sake of exercising some manual trade; and he prohibited, upon severe penalties, the sale of any thing to strangers but oil.

Lycurgus prohibited strangers from coming to Sparta at all, unless they could assign some special reason for it; and he re-

stricted his citizens from travelling to foreign countries. Thucydides says it was from fear that strangers might imitate his constitution and improve in virtue. But Plutarch supposes it was rather from a fear that his Spartans by intercourse with other nations might be corrupted. (Langhorne's Plutarch, i. 155.) Whichever was the real motive, the spirit of the law was the same, — jealousy and hatred of strangers. The same spirit, though in a milder form, is discernible in the regulations of Solon. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, the sentiment of aversion was so universal, that the same word signified at once a foreigner and an enemy.

The institutions both of Lycurgus and Solon, were formed with the intention of guarding against the evils of individual poverty. Solon either cancelled all debts, or reduced the rate of interest which had previously been lawful at Athens, and made the *mina*, which had been of seventy-three drachmas, pass for one hundred. He also enacted that the person of a debtor should no longer be liable to be taken for security. (Langhorne's Plutarch, i. 216.) All these measures, except the last, were unjust and odious, nor can the integrity of Solon's character rescue them from that imputation. They violated the rights of property, and only relieved one class of citizens by oppressing another.

Lycurgus made a new and equal distribution of lands among all the heads of families in his republic; and by various institutions endeavoured to abolish all distinction or difference between his citizens in regard to the amount of their possessions. He introduced a sort of community of goods, of public tables, and even of wives and children. He banished all gold and silver, and allowed only the use of iron for coin; and he totally interdicted all commerce.

The fundamental principle of Solon's system of laws was *equality*. That of Lycurgus was *patriotism*. Their laws were adapted to these purposes, no doubt, with great ability; but many of them were unjust, unnatural, indecent, and absurd. And although Lycurgus, after his new distribution of lands, said that "Laconia looked like an estate newly divided among many brothers," (Langhorne's Plutarch, i. 133,) yet neither in his code, nor in that of Solon, can be found any thing like a single regulation which can be traced to a sentiment of fraternal tenderness, reconciled with the immutable law of justice.

The laws of Moses sanctioned no injustice. Their lands, given them expressly by God, and acquired by conquest, were distributed in just proportions among the twelve tribes. The laws of marriage, inheritance, and succession were adapted to the purpose of keeping the district originally allotted to each tribe always in its



possession, and the year of jubilee twice in every century restored all individual estates, which had been alienated during the fifty years, to the families which had originally possessed them. No debts were cancelled. The person of the debtor was never liable to be taken for security. But he could sell his service for seven years, and, if he expressly chose it, for life. Interest for the loan of money might be taken from a stranger, but not from a poor Israelite. And it was not lawful to keep his *raiment* in pledge over night. The reason of this last regulation affords a very remarkable example of that spirit of tenderness and humanity which I have alleged as the peculiar characteristic of the Mosaic law. "For that," [his raiment] says God, "is his covering only; it is his raiment for his skin; WHEREIN SHALL HE SLEEP? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious." (Exodus xxii. 27.) What an appeal to the benevolent and compassionate affections of the heart is contained in that simple question, — *wherein shall he sleep?* Nothing like it can be found in the laws of Lycurgus or Solon; and if you wish to see the perfect contrast to it, look into the laws of Rome in her highest splendor and glory, when not only the person of the debtor, but even his life, was left at the discretion and mercy of the creditor.

"That law of Solon," says Plutarch, (i. 223) "is justly commended, which forbids men to speak ill of the dead. For *piety* requires us to consider the deceased as sacred; *justice* calls upon us to spare those who are no longer in being, and *good policy*, to prevent the perpetuating of hatred. He forbade his people also to revile the living in a temple, in a court of justice, in the great assembly of the people, or at the public games."

All these motives of *piety*, *justice*, and of *good policy* are marked with characters far more glowing and of deeper impression, in the prohibitions, to curse the deaf, to put a stumbling-block before the blind, to vex or afflict the widow and orphan, and to hate or bear a grudge against any one; but, in the positive injunction to admonish or rebuke a fellow-citizen to guard him against his own sins, to love him as themselves, and to perform offices of kindness even to personal enemies we see a tenderness to the infirmities of human nature, a purity, a sublimity of virtue, which never entered, I say not, into the codes of the ancient legislators, but into the imaginations of the profoundest and most exalted of their philosophers. Noble and elevated as were the moral doctrines of Socrates and Plato, the spirit of the Mosaic law, given a thousand years before they existed, far transcended them in excellence.

Observe, also, that, in the Mosaic law, the duties of humanity

are made duties of piety. The violation of any article of a law given by God, was obviously an offence against God ; but, independent of this general principle, almost every one of the rules to which I have referred are sanctioned by a direct communication of God's anger as the penalty for transgression against it. When we consider how much more rational was the worship, and how much more awful was the fear, of the ineffable Jehovah, than could possibly be those of the heathen deities, which were vanity and a lie, we must irresistibly conclude that the *sanction* to the moral part of the Jewish law was as much more powerful and efficacious than that of any other morality, as the moral itself was more calculated to promote the dignity and happiness of human kind.

In my next letter I shall endeavour to specify the improvement upon this law, introduced by the Christian dispensation.

A.

## LETTER VIII.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 21 March, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

I HAVE promised you, in my former letters, to state the particulars in which I deemed the Christian dispensation to be an improvement or perfection of the law delivered from Sinai, considered as including a system of morality. But before I come to this point, it is proper to remark upon the moral character of the books of the Old Testament, subsequent to those of Moses. Some of these are historical ; some prophetical ; some poetical ; and two may be considered as peculiarly of the moral class, one of them being an affecting dissertation upon the vanity of human life, and the other a collection of moral sentences under the name of Proverbs.

I have already observed that the great, immovable, and eternal foundation of the superiority of scriptural morals to all other morality, was the idea of God disclosed in them and only in them. The *unity* of God, his *omnipotence*, his *righteousness*, his *mercy*, and the infinity of all his attributes, are marked in every line of the Old Testament in characters which nothing less than blindness can fail to discern, and nothing less than fraud can misrepre-



sent. This conception of God served as a basis for the *piety* of his worshippers, which was of course incomparably more *rational* and more *profound* than it was possible that piety could be, which adored "devils for deities," or even than that piety of philosophers like Socrates, and Plato, and Cicero, who, with purer and more exalted ideas of the Divine Nature than the rabble and the poets, still considered the existence of any God at all as a question upon which they could form no decided opinion. You have seen that even Cicero believed that the only solid foundation of all human virtue was *piety*; and it was impossible that a *piety* so far transcending that of all other nations should not contain in its consequences a system of moral virtue equally transcendent.

The first of the ten commandments was that the Jewish people should never admit the idea of any other God. The object of the second, third, and fourth commandments was merely to impress with greater force the obligation of the first, and to obviate the tendencies and temptations which might arise to its being neglected or disregarded. Throughout the whole law the same injunction is continually renewed. All the rites and ceremonies were adapted to root it deeper into the heart and soul of the chosen people. That the Lord Jehovah was to be forever the sole and exclusive object of love, reverence, and adoration, unbounded as his own nature, was the principle that pervaded every letter of the law, and the whole Bible is but a commentary upon it and corollary from it.

The law was given not merely in the form of commandment from God, but in that of a *covenant*, or compact between the Supreme Creator and the Jewish people. It was sanctioned by the blessing and the curse pronounced upon Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal in the presence of the whole people, men, women, children, and strangers, and by the solemn acceptance of the whole people, responding, Amen, to every one of the curses denounced for violation on their part, of the covenant.

From that day until the birth of Christ (a period of about 1500 years) the historical books of the Old Testament are no more than a simple record of the fulfilment of the covenant in all its blessings and all its curses, exactly adapted to the fulfilment or the transgression of its duties by the people. The nation was governed first by Joshua, under the express appointment of God; then by a succession of judges; and afterwards by a double line of kings, until conquered and carried into captivity by the kings of Assyria and of Babylon; seventy years afterwards, restored again to their country, their temple and their laws, and again conquered by the Romans, and ruled by their tributary kings and by precon-



suls. Through all these vicissitudes and varieties of fortune, they never complied with the duties to which they had bound themselves by the covenant without being loaded with the blessings promised on Mount Gerizim, and never departed from them without being afflicted with some of the curses denounced upon Mount Ebal. The prophetic books are themselves historical; for prophecy is, in the strictest sense, no more than history related before the event. But the Jewish prophets, of whom there was a succession almost constant from the time of Joshua to that of Christ, were messengers specially commissioned by God to warn the people of their duty, to foretell the punishments which awaited their transgressions, and finally, to keep alive, by unintermitted prediction, the expectation of the Messiah, the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

With this conception of the Divine Nature, so infinitely surpassing that of any other nation; with this system of moral virtue, so indissolubly blended, as by the eternal constitution of things, it must be blended with piety; with this uninterrupted series of signs and wonders, prophets and seers, miraculous interpositions of the omnipotent Creator, to preserve and vindicate the truth, it is lamentable, but to those who know the nature of man, it is not surprising to find that the Jewish history is little else than a narrative of the idolatries and corruptions of the Israelites and of their monarchs; that the very people who had heard the voice of God from Mount Sinai should within forty days compel Aaron to make a golden calf, and worship that "as the Gods who had brought them out of Egypt;" that the very Solomon, the wisest of mankind, to whom God had twice revealed himself in visions, the sublime dedicator of the temple, the witness in presence of the whole people of the fire from heaven which consumed the offerings upon the altar, and of the glory of the Lord that filled the house; that he in his old age, "beguiled by fair idolatresses," should have fallen from the worship of the ever blessed Jehovah, to that of Ashtoreth, and Milcom, and Chemosh, and Molech, the "abominations" of all the petty tribes in the neighbourhood of Judea, that Baal, and Dagon, and Miplezeth, and Rimmon, and Nisroch, and the sun, moon, planets, and all the host of heaven; that the mountains and the plains, every high place, and every grove, should have swarmed with idols to corrupt the hearts and debase the souls of a people favored of Heaven so highly, the elect of Almighty God, — may be among the mysteries of Divine Providence, which it is not given to mortality to explain, but is unaccountable only to those who presume to demand why it has pleased the Supreme Arbiter of events to create such a being as man.

Observe, however, that amidst all the varieties of destiny which that nation underwent, amidst the atrocious crimes with which they so often polluted themselves, through all their servitudes, their dismemberments, their captivities and their transmigrations, the divine light which had been imparted exclusively to them, was never extinguished. The law delivered from Sinai was preserved in all its purity. The histories, which attested its violations and its accomplishments, were recorded and never lost. The writings of the prophets, of David and of Solomon, all inspired with the same idea of the Godhead, the same intertwinement of religion and morality, and the same anticipation of the divine Immanuel, the God with us, survived all the changes of government and of constitution, which befell the people. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; the Law and the Prophets, eternal in their nature, went before them unsullied and unimpaired through all the ruins of rebellion and revolution, of conquest and dispersion, of war, pestilence, and famine. The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian empires, Tyre and Sidon, Phœnicia, Carthage, and all the other nations of antiquity, rose and fell in their religious institutions at the same time as in their laws and their governments. It was the practice of the Romans, when they besieged a city, to invite its gods to come over to them. They considered the gods as summer friends, ready to desert their votaries in the hour of their calamity, or as traitors, ready to sell them for a bribe. They had no higher opinion of their own gods than of the stranger deities, whom, as Gibbon said, they were always ready to admit to the freedom of the city. All the gods of the heathens have perished with their makers; for where, upon the face of the globe, could now be found the human being who believes in any one of them? So much more deep and strong was the hold which the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob took upon the imagination and reason of mankind, that I might almost invert the question, and ask, where is to be found the human being believing the existence of any God at all, and not believing in *him*?

✓ The moral character of the Old Testament then is, that piety to God is the foundation of all virtue, and that virtue is inseparable from it; but that piety without the practice of virtue, is itself a crime and an aggravation of all iniquity. All the virtues which were recognized by the heathens are inculcated, not only with more authority but with more energy of argument and more eloquent persuasion, in the Bible, than in all the writings of the ancient moralists. In one of the Apocryphal books (Wisdom of Solomon, viii. 7,) the cardinal virtues are expressly named: “And if a man



love Righteousness, her labors are virtues: for she teacheth *temperance* and *prudence*, *justice* and *fortitude*; which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life." The book of Job, whether to be considered as a history or an allegorical parable, was written to teach the lessons of patience under affliction, of resignation under divine chastisement, of undoubting confidence in the justice and goodness of God under every possible calamity, and of inflexible adherence to integrity under every temptation or provocation to depart from it. The morality of the Apocryphal books is generally the same as that of the inspired writers, excepting that in some of them there is more stress laid upon the minor objects of the law and the merely formal ordinances of police, and less continual recurrence to the weightier matters. The book of Ecclesiasticus however contains more wisdom and more useful instruction than all the sayings of the seven Grecian sages put together.

It was upon this foundation that the more perfect system of Christian morality was to be raised. But I must defer the consideration of this to my next letter. In the mean time, as I have urged that the scriptural idea of God is the foundation of all perfect virtue, and that it is totally different from the idea of God conceived by any other ancient nation, I would recommend it to you, in perusing hereafter the Scriptures, to meditate upon the expressions by which they mark the character of the Deity, and to reflect upon the duties to him and to your fellow mortals, which follow by inevitable induction from them. That you may have an exact idea of the opinions of the ancient heathen philosophers concerning God, or rather the gods, study Cicero's *Dialogues de Naturâ Deorum*, and read the Abbé Olivet's *Remarks on the Theology of the Grecian Philosophers*, annexed to his translation of that work.

I am your affectionate father.

A.

## LETTER IX.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 4 April, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

THE imperfections of the Mosaic institutions, which it was the object of Christ's mission upon earth to remove, appear to me to have been these.



1. *The want of a sufficient sanction.* The rewards and the penalties of the Levitical law had all reference to the present life. There are many passages in the Old Testament which imply a state of existence after death, and some which directly assert a future state of retribution. But none of these were contained in the delivery of the law. At the time of Christ's advent, it was so far from being a settled article of the Jewish faith, that it was a subject of sharp and bitter controversy between the two principal sects of the Pharisees who believed in it, and of the Sadducees who denied it. It was the special purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth, to bring *immortality* to light. He substituted the rewards and the penalties of a future state in the room of all others. The Jewish sanctions were exclusively temporal; those of Christ exclusively spiritual.

2. *The want of universality.* The Jewish dispensation was exclusively confined to one small and obscure nation. The purposes of the Supreme Creator, in restricting the knowledge of himself to one petty herd of Egyptian slaves, are as inaccessible to our intelligence, as those of his having concealed from them, as well as from all the rest of mankind, the certain knowledge of their immortality. The fact is unquestionably so. The mission of Christ was intended to communicate to the whole human race all the permanent advantages of the Mosaic law, superadding to them, upon the condition of repentance, *the kingdom of heaven*; the blessings of eternal life.

3. *The complexity of the objects of legislation.* I have remarked in a former letter, that the law from Sinai comprised not only all the ordinary subjects of regulation for human societies, but those which human legislators cannot reach. It was a civil law, a municipal law, an ecclesiastical law, a law of police, and a law of morality and religion. It prohibited murder, adultery, theft, and perjury; and it prescribed the number of taches for the curtains of the tabernacles, and directed how the snuffers for the holy candlesticks were to be made. It prescribed rules for the thoughts as well as for the actions of men. This complexity, however practicable and even suitable for one small national society, could not have been extended to *all the families of the earth*. The parts of the Jewish law adapted to promote the happiness of mankind, under every variety of situation and of government in which they can be placed, were all recognized and adopted by Christ, and he expressly separated them from all the rest. He disclaimed all interference with the ordinary objects of human legislation. He declared that his kingdom was not of this world. He acknowledged the authority of the Jewish magistrates. He paid for his

own person the tribute to the Romans. He refused, in more than one instance, to assume the office of a judge in matters of legal controversy. He strictly limited the objects of his own precepts and authority to religion and morals. He denounced no temporal punishments; he promised no temporal rewards. He took up man as a governable being, where the human magistrate is compelled to leave him, and supplied both precepts of virtue and motives for practising it, such as no other moralist or legislator ever attempted to introduce.

4. *The burthensome duties of positive rites, minute formalities, and expensive sacrifices.* All these had a tendency not only to establish and maintain the separation of the Jews from all other nations, but in process of time had been mistaken by the scribes and pharisees and lawyers, and probably by the great body of the people, for the substance of religion. All these were abolished by Christ, or, as St. Paul expresses it, were "nailed to his cross."

You will recollect that I am now speaking of Christianity, not as the scheme of redemption to mankind from the consequences of original sin, but as a system of morality for regulating the conduct of men while on earth. And the most striking and extraordinary feature of its character in this respect is its tendency and its exhortations to *absolute perfection*. The language of Christ to his disciples is explicit: "Be ye therefore *perfect* even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And this he enjoins at the conclusion of that precept so expressly laid down and so unanswerably argued, "to love their enemies, to bless those that cursed them, to pray for those that despitefully used and persecuted them." He seems to consider this temper of benevolence in return for injury as constituting of itself a perfection similar to that of the Divine nature. It is undoubtedly the greatest conquest which the spirit of man can achieve over its own infirmities; and to him who can attain that elevation of virtue which it requires, all other victories over the evil passions must be easy. Nor was this absolute perfection merely preached by Christ as a doctrine; it was practised by himself throughout his life; practised to the last instant of his agony upon the cross; practised under circumstances of trial such as no other human being was ever exposed to. He proved, by his own example, the possibility of that virtue which he taught; and although possessed of miraculous powers sufficient to control all the laws of nature, he expressly and repeatedly declined the use of them to save himself from any part of the sufferings which he was to endure.

The sum of Christian morality, then, consists in *piety to God*, and *benevolence to man*. Piety manifested not by formal solemnities



ties and sacrifices of burnt-offerings, but by *repentance*, by *obedience*, by *submission*, by *humility*, by the worship of the heart; and *Benevolence*, not founded upon selfish motives, but superior even to the sense of wrong or the resentment of injuries. Worldly prudence is scarcely noticed among all the instructions of Christ. The pursuit of honors and of riches, the objects of ambition and avarice, are strongly discountenanced in many places: an undue solicitude about the ordinary cares of life is occasionally and forcibly reproofed. Of worldly prudence there are rules enough in the Proverbs of Solomon, and in the compilation of the son of Sirach. Christ passes no censure upon them. But he left what I have called the selfish virtues, where he found them. It was not to proclaim common-place morality that he came down from heaven. His commands were *new*; that his disciples should love one another; that they should love even strangers; nay, that they should love their enemies. He prescribed barriers against all the maleficent passions; he gave as a law the utmost point of perfection of which human powers are susceptible; and at the same time he allowed degrees of indulgence and relaxation to human frailty, proportioned to the powers of every individual.

An eminent and ingenious writer in support of Christianity, Dr. Paley, expresses the opinion that the direct object of the Christian revelation was “to supply motives, and not rules; sanctions, and not precepts;” and he strongly intimates that, independent of the purposes of Christ’s atonement and propitiation for the sins of the world, the only object of his mission upon earth was to reveal a future state; to bring life and immortality to light. He does not appear to think that Christ promulgated any new principle of morality, and he positively asserts “that morality neither in the gospel, nor in any other book, can be a subject of discovery; because the qualities of actions depend entirely upon their effects, which effects must all along have been the subject of human experience.” (Paley’s Evidences of Christianity, ii. 25, 26.)

To this I reply, in the express terms of Christ, (John xiii. 34.) “A *new* command I give unto you—that ye love one another.” And I add, that this command explained, illustrated and dilated as it was by the whole tenor of his discourses, and especially by the parable of the Good Samaritan, appears to me to have been not only entirely new, but in the most rigorous sense of the word a *discovery* in morals—and a discovery, the importance of which to the happiness of the human species, as far exceeds any discovery in the physical laws of nature, as the soul is superior to the body.

If it be objected that the principle of benevolence towards ene-



mies and the forgiveness of injuries, may be found not only in the books of the Old Testament, but even in some of the heathen writers, and particularly in the discourses of Socrates, I answer, that the same may be said of the immortality of the soul, and of the rewards and punishments of a future state. The doctrine was not more a discovery than the precept. But their connection with each other, the authority with which they were taught, and the miracles by which they were enforced, belong exclusively to the mission of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Attend particularly to the miracle recorded in the second Chapter of St. Luke, as having taken place at the birth of Jesus. When the angel of the Lord said to the shepherds — “Fear not, for behold *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord.” In these words the character of Jesus as the Redeemer was announced. But the historian adds: “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.*” Which words, as I understand them, announce the moral precept of Benevolence, as explicitly for the object of Christ’s appearance, as the preceding words had declared the purpose of Redemption.

It is related in the life of the dramatic poet Terence, that when one of the personages of his comedy, the Self-Tormentor, the first time uttered on the Theatre the line

“Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto,”

an universal shout of applause burst forth from the whole audience; and that in so great a multitude of Romans, and of deputies from the nations their subjects and allies, there was not one individual but felt in his heart the power of this noble sentiment. Yet how feeble and defective it is, in comparison with the Christian command of charity, as unfolded in the discourses of Christ, and enlarged upon in the writings of his Apostles! The heart of man will always respond with rapture to this sentiment, when there is no selfish or unsocial passion at work to oppose it. But the command to lay it down as the great and fundamental rule of conduct for human life, and to subdue and sacrifice all the tyrannical and selfish passions to preserve it, this is the peculiar and

<sup>1</sup> All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them; That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things *which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.* Matthew xiii. 34, 35.

unfading glory of Christianity. This is the conquest over ourselves, which, without the aid of a gracious and merciful God, none of us can achieve, and which it was worthy of his special interposition, to enable us to accomplish.

From your affectionate father.

A.

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## LETTER X.

TO MR. GEORGE W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 23 June, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

THE whole system of Christian morality appears to have been set forth by its Divine Author in the Sermon upon the Mount, recorded in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of St. Matthew. I intend hereafter to make them the subject of remarks, much more at large.\* For the present I confine myself merely to general views. What I would impress upon your mind as infinitely important to the happiness and virtue of your life is the general spirit of Christianity, and the duties which result from it.

In my last letter, I showed you from the very words of our Saviour, that he commanded his disciples to aim at absolute perfection, and that this perfection consisted in self-subjugation and brotherly love; in the complete conquest of our own passions, and in the practice of benevolence to our fellow-creatures, including among them our most inveterate enemies.

Among the Grecian systems of moral philosophy, that of the Stoics resembled the Christian doctrine in this particular, of requiring the total subjugation of the passions, and this part of the Stoic principles was adopted by the Academics. You will find the question discussed with all the eloquence and ingenuity of Cicero, in the fourth of his Tusculan disputations, which I advise you to read and to meditate upon. You will there find proved as fully as human reason can prove, the duty of totally subduing the passions.

It is sometimes objected that this theory is not adapted to the infirmities of human nature, — that it is not made for a being so constituted as man — that an earthen vessel is not formed to dash itself against a rock — that in yielding to the impulse of the passions, man only follows the dictates of his nature, and that to subdue them entirely is an effort beyond his powers.

The weakness and frailty of man it is not possible to deny ; it is too strongly attested by all human experience, as well as by the whole tenor of the Scriptures ; but the degree of weakness must be limited by the efforts to overcome it, and not by indulgence to it. Once admit weakness as an argument to forbear exertion, and it results in absolute impotence. It is also very inconclusive reasoning to infer that because perfection is not absolutely to be obtained, it is therefore not to be sought. Human excellence consists in the approximation to perfection ; and the only means of approaching to any term, is by endeavouring to attain the term itself.

With these convictions upon the mind ; with a sincere and honest effort to practise upon them, and with the aid of a divine blessing which is promised to it, the approaches to perfection may at least be so great as nearly to answer all the ends which absolute perfection itself could attain. All exertion therefore is virtue, and if the tree is to be judged by its fruits, it is certain that all the most virtuous characters of heathen antiquity were the disciples of this Stoic doctrine.

Let it even be admitted that a perfect command over the passions is unattainable to human infirmity, and it will yet be true that the degree of moral excellence possessed by every individual is in exact proportion to the degree of control which he exercises over himself. According to the Stoics, all vice was resolvable into folly ; according to Christian principles, it is all the effect of weakness.

✓ In order to preserve the dominion of our own passions, it behoves us to be constantly and strictly upon our guard against the influence and the infection of the passions of others. This caution is above all necessary in youth, and I deem it the more indispensable to enjoin it upon you, because as kindness and benevolence comprise the whole system of Christian duties, there may be and often is great danger of falling into error and vice, merely by the want of energy to resist the example or the enticement of others. ) On this point the true character of Christian morality appears to me to have been misunderstood by some of its ablest and warmest defenders. In Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity there is a chapter upon the morality of the Gospel, the general tenor of which, as of the whole work, is excellent, but in which there is the following passage :

“ The truth is there are two opposite descriptions of character under which mankind may generally be classed. The one possesses vigour, firmness, resolution, is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentments. The other, meek, yield-



ing, complying, forgiving ; not prompt to act, but willing to suffer ; silent, and gentle, under rudeness and insult ; suing for reconciliation, where others would demand satisfaction, giving way to the pushes of impudence, conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headedness, the intractability of those with whom it has to deal.

“ The former of these characters is and ever hath been the favorite of the world. It is the character of great men. There is a dignity in it which universally commands respect.

“ The latter is poor-spirited, *TAME*, and *ABJECT*. Yet so it hath happened, that with the Founder of Christianity, this latter is the subject of his commendation, his precepts, his example ; and that the former is so in no part of its composition.”

Dr. Paley is, in this place, adopting the opinions of Soame Jenyns, whose essay upon the internal evidence of Christianity he very strongly commends. But I cannot consider this as an accurate and discerning delineation of character, or as exhibiting a correct representation of Christian principles.

The Founder of Christianity did indeed pronounce distinct and positive blessings upon the *poor in spirit*, (which is by no means synonymous with the poor-spirited) and upon the *meek*. But in what part of the Gospel did Dr. Paley find him countenancing by commendation, precept, or example, the *tame* and *abject* ? The character which Christ assumed upon earth was that of a *Lord* and *Master*. It was in this character that his disciples received and acknowledged him. The obedience that he required was unbounded — infinitely beyond that which ever was claimed by the most absolute earthly sovereign over his subjects. Never for one instant did he recede from this authoritative station. He preserved it in washing the feet of his disciples. He preserved it in his answer to the High Priest before whom he was brought for trial. He preserved it in his answer to the officer who struck him for this very deportment to the High Priest. He preserved it in the very agony of his ejaculation upon the cross, “ Father, forgive them *for they know not what they do.*” He expressly declared himself to be the Prince of this world, and the Son of God. He spoke as one having authority, not only to his disciples, but to his mother, to his judges, to Pilate the Roman governor, to John the Baptist, his precursor, and there is in the four Gospels not one act, not one word recorded of him excepting in his communion with God, that was not a direct or implied assertion of authority. He said to his disciples (Matthew xi. 29,) “ learn of me, for I am *meek and lowly in heart*, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” But where did he ever say to them, “ learn of me, for I am *tame* and *abject* ? ” There

is certainly nothing more strongly marked in the precept and example of Christ than the principle of stubborn and inflexible resistance against the impulses of others to *evil*. He taught his disciples to renounce every thing that is counted enjoyment upon earth, to take up their cross and suffer ill-treatment, persecution and death for his sake. What else is the book of Acts of the Apostles than a record of the faithfulness with which those chosen ministers of the Gospel, carried these injunctions into execution. In the conduct and speeches of Stephen, of Peter and John, or of Paul is there any thing that could justly be called tame or abject? Is there any thing in them indicating a resemblance to the second class of characters into which Dr. Paley divides all mankind? If there is a character upon historical record, distinguished by a *bold, intrepid, tenacious* and *inflexible* spirit, it is that of St. Paul. It was to such characters only, that the commission of teaching all nations could be committed with the certainty of success. Observe the expressions of Christ in his charge to Peter — (Matt. xvi. 18.) “And I say also unto thee, that thou art *Peter*, (a rock) and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” Dr. Paley’s Christian is one of those drivellers who, to use a vulgar adage, can never say “*No*,” to any body. The true Christian is the “*justum et tenacem propositi virum*” of Horace. The combination of these qualities so essential to the heroic character, with those of *meekness, lowliness of heart, and brotherly love*, is what constitutes that moral *perfection* of which Christ gave an example in his own life, and to which he commanded his disciples to aspire.

Endeavour, my dear son, to discipline your own heart and to govern your conduct through life by these principles, thus combined. Be meek, be gentle, be kindly affectioned to all mankind, not excepting even your enemies. But never be tame or abject — never give way to the pushes of impudence, or shew yourself yielding or complying to prejudices, wrong-headedness or intractability which would lead or draw you astray from the dictates of your conscience, and your own sense of right. “Till you die, let not your integrity depart from you.” Build your house upon the Rock, — and then let the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house. It shall not fall; for it will be founded upon a Rock. So promises your blessed Lord and Master, and so prays your affectionate father.

A.



## LETTER XI.

TO MR. G. W. ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 14 September, 1813.

MY DEAR SON,

THE fourth and last point of view in which I proposed to offer you some general observations upon the Sacred Scriptures, was with reference to *literature*. / And the first remark which presents itself here is, that the five books of Moses are the most ancient monument of written language, now extant in the world. The book of Job is nearly of the same date, and by many of the Christian and Jewish commentators is believed to have been written by Moses. /

The employment of alphabetical characters to represent all the articulations of the human voice, is the greatest invention that ever was compassed by human genius. Plato says that it was the discovery either of a god, or of a man divinely inspired. The Egyptians ascribed it to Thot, whom the Greeks afterwards worshipped under the name of Hermes. This, however, is a fabulous origin. That it was an Egyptian invention there is little reason to doubt, and it was a part of that learning of the Egyptians, in all of which we know that Moses was versed.

It is probable that when Moses wrote, this art was, if not absolutely of recent, yet of no very remote invention. There was but one copy of the law written in a book ; it was deposited in the ark of the covenant, and was read aloud once in seven years to all the people at their general assembly in the feast of tabernacles. (Deut. xxxi. 9, 10, 25, 26.) There was one other copy, written upon stones, erected on Mount Ebal. (Deut. xxvii. 3-8.) It does not appear that there existed any other copies. In process of time, the usage of reading it every seven years must have been dropped, and the monument upon Mount Ebal must have perished. For in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxii.) about eight hundred years afterwards, the book of the law was *found* in the temple. How long it had been lost is not expressly told ; but, from the astonishment and consternation of Josiah upon hearing the book read, its contents must have been long forgotten, so that scarcely a tradition of them remained. We are, indeed, told (1 Kings viii. 9, and 2 Chron. v. 10) that when the ark of the covenant was deposited in the temple of Solomon, "there was *nothing* in the *ark* save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb." The



two tables contained not the whole law, but only the ten commandments. (Deut. v. 22 ; x. 4, 5.) The book of the law was therefore no longer in the ark at the dedication of Solomon's temple, that is, about five hundred years after the law was given, and three hundred years before the book was found by Hilkiah, the high priest in the eighteenth year of Josiah.

From these circumstances, as well as from the expedients used by Moses and Joshua, for preserving the memorial of the law, and the repeated *covenants* between God and the people, (Deut. v. 2 ; x. 1 ; xxix. 5 ; Joshua xxiv. 25) it is obvious that the art and the practice of writing were extremely rare ; that very few of the people were ever taught to read ; that there were few books extant, and of those few only single copies.

The arts of writing, speaking, and thinking, with their several modifications of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, were never cultivated among the Hebrews, as they were, though not until nearly a thousand years later than Moses, among the Greeks. Philosophical research and the spirit of analysis appears to have belonged, among the ancient nations, exclusively to the Greeks. They studied language as a science, and from the discoveries they made in this pursuit resulted a system of literary composition founded upon logical deductions. The language of the sacred writers was not constructed upon the foundation of abstruse science. It partakes of the nature of all primitive language, which is almost entirely figurative, and in some degree of the character of primitive writing and of hieroglyphics. We are not told from what materials Moses compiled the book of Genesis, which contains the history of the creation, and of three thousand years succeeding it, and which terminates three generations prior to the birth of Moses himself ; whether he had it altogether from tradition, or whether he collected it from more ancient written or *painted* memorials. The account of the creation, of the fall, and all the antediluvian part of the history, carries strong internal evidence of having been copied, or, if I may so express myself, translated from hieroglyphical or symbolical records. The narrative is of the most perfect simplicity. The discourses of the persons introduced are given as if taken down verbatim from their mouths, and the narrative is scarcely any thing more than the connecting link of the discourses. The genealogies are given with great precision, and this is one of the most remarkable peculiarities of the Old Testament. The rest is all figurative. The rib, the garden, the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, the apple, the serpent, are all images which seem to indicate a hieroglyphical origin.

All the historical books, both of the Old and New Testament,

retain the peculiar characteristics that I have noticed, the simplicity and beauty of the narrative, the practice of repeating all discourse, as in the identical words spoken, and the constant use of figurative, symbolical, and allegorical language. But of the rules of composition prescribed by the Grecian schools, the unities of Aristotle, or the congruities of figures taught by the Greek philologists, not a feature is to be seen. / The Psalms are a collection of songs. The Song of Solomon is a pastoral poem; the Proverbs are a collection of moral sentences and maxims, apparently addressed by Solomon to his son, with the addition of some others of the same description. The prophetic books are partly historical, and partly poetical. / They contain the narrative of the visions, and other revelations of the Deity to the prophets who recorded them. | In the New Testament the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are historical. / They contain memoirs of the life of Christ, and some of his discourses, and the proceedings of his principal apostles for some years immediately after his decease. The simplicity of the narrative is the same as that of the Old Testament. The style in general indicates an age when reading and writing had become more common, and books more multiplied. ( The Epistles of St. Paul are the productions of a mind educated to the learning of the age, and well versed even in the Grecian literature. From his history it appears that he was not only capable of maintaining an argument with the doctors of the Jewish law, but of discussing principles with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers. | His speech at Athens, as a specimen of eloquence, was worthy of an audience in the native country of Demosthenes. The Apocalypse of St. John resembles in many respects some of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The figurative, symbolical, and allegorical language of these books, show a range of imagination suitable only to be the record of dreams and visions. Their meaning is in many parts inexplicably obscure. It has been, and is to this day, among the follies and vices of many sects of Christians to attempt explanations of them adapted to sectarian purposes and opinions. The style of none of the books, either of the Old or New Testament, affords a general model for imitation to a writer of the present age. The principles and rules of composition derived from the Greek and Roman schools, and the examples of their principal writers, have been so generally adopted in modern literature, that the style of the Scriptures, differing so essentially from them, could not be imitated without great affectation. / But for pathos of narrative, for the selection of incidents, that go directly to the heart, for the picturesque of character and manners, the selection of



circumstances that mark the individuality of persons ; for copiousness, grandeur, and sublimity of imagery ; for unanswerable cogency and closeness of reasoning, and for irresistible force of persuasion, no book in the world deserves to be so unceasingly studied, and so profoundly meditated upon, as the Bible.

I shall conclude here the series of letters which I purposed about two years since to write you, for the purpose of exhorting you to search the Scriptures, and of pointing out to your consideration the general points of application with a view to which I thought this study might be made profitable to the improvement and usefulness of your future life. There are other and particular points to which I may hereafter occasionally invite your attention. I am sensible how feeble and superficial what I have written has been, and every letter has convinced me more and more of my incompetency to the adequate performance of the task I had assumed. But my great object was to show you the importance of devoting your own faculties to this pursuit. To read the Bible is of itself a laudable occupation, and can scarcely fail of being a useful employment of time. But the habit of reflecting upon what you have read is equally essential as that of reading itself, to give it all the efficacy of which it is susceptible.

I therefore now recommend it to you to set apart a small portion of every day to read one or more chapters of the Bible, and always to read it with reference to some particular train of observation or of reflection. In these letters I have suggested to you four general ones ; considering the Scriptures as divine revelations, as historical records, as a system of morals, and as literary compositions ; but there are many other points of view in which they may be subjects of useful investigation. As an expedient for fixing your own attention, make it also a practice for some time to minute down in writing your reflections upon what you read from day to day. You may perhaps at first find this irksome, and your reflections themselves scanty and unimportant ; but they will soon become both easy and copious. And be careful, above all, not to let your reading make you either a pedant or a bigot. Let it never puff you up with a conceited opinion of your own knowledge, or make you intolerant of the opinions which others draw from the same source, however different from your own. And may the merciful Creator, who gave the Scriptures for our instruction, bless your study of them, and make them to you "fruitful of good works."

From your affectionate father,

A.

JAN 28 1949





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